

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

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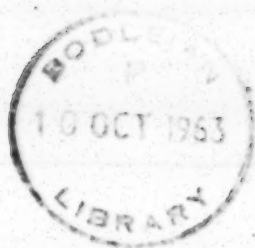
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T H E A U T H O R

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G L A S G O W ,

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PARADISE RE GAIN'D.

BOOK I.

I Who ere while the happy garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully try'd
Through all temptation, and the tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls'd,
And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness.
Thou spirit who ledst this glorious eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song else mute,
And bear through height or depth of nature's bounds
With prosperous wing full summ'd to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age,
Worthy t'have not remain'd so long unsung.
Now had the great proclaimer with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cry'd
Repentance, and heaven's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptiz'd: to his great baptism flock'd
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd
To the flood Jordan came, as then obscure,
Unmark'd, unknown; but him the baptist soon

Descry'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his heavenly office, nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd: on him baptiz'd
Heav'n open'd, and in likeness of a dove
The spirit descended, while the father's voice
From heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved son.
That heard the adversary, who roving still
About the world, at that assembly fam'd
Would not be last, and with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, th' exalted man, to whom
Such high attest was giv'n, a while survey'd
With wonder, then with envy fraught, and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy consistory; and them amidst
With looks agast and sad he thus bespake.

O antient pow'rs of air and this wide world,
For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember hell
Our hated habitation; well ye know
How many ages, as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd, and rul'd
In manner at our will th' affairs of earth,
Since Adam and his facil consort Eve
Lost paradise deceiv'd by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head, long the decrees of heav'n
Delay, for longest time to him is short;

And now too soon for us the circling hours
 This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we
 Must bide the stroke of that long threaten'd wound;
 At least if so we can, and by the head
 Broken be not intended all our power
 To be infring'd, our freedom and our being,
 In this fair empire won of earth and air:
 For this ill news I bring, the woman's seed
 Destin'd to this, is late of woman born,
 His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
 But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, displaying
 All virtue, grace, and wisdom to atchieve
 Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
 Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
 His coming. is sent harbinger, who all
 Invites, and in the consecrated stream
 Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so
 Purifi'd to receive him pure, or rather
 To do him honour as their king; all come,
 And he himself among them was baptiz'd,
 Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
 The testimony of heav'n, that who he is
 Thenceforth the nations may not doubt; I saw
 The prophet do him reverence, on him rising
 Out of the water, heav'n above the clouds
 Unfold her chrystal doors, thence on his head
 A perfect dove descend, what e'er it meant,
 And out of heav'n the sov'reign voice I heard,
 This is my son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.
 His mother then is mortal, but his sire,
 He who obtains the monarchy of heav'n,

And what will he not do to advance his son?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep;
Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his father's glory shine;
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
Not force, but well couch'd fraud, well woven snare,
Ere in the head of nations he appear
Their king, their leader, and supream on earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam, and th' exploit perform'd
Successfully; a calmer voyage now
Will waite me; and the way found prosp'rous once
Induces best to hope of like success.
He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to th' infernal crew.
Distracted and surpriz'd with deep dismay
At these sad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprize
To him their great dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents and potentates, and kings, yea gods
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.

So to the coast of Jordan he directs
 His easie steps; girded with snaky wiles,
 Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
 This man of men, attested son of God,
 Temptation and all guile on him to try;
 So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
 To end his reign on earth so long enjoy'd:
 But contrary unweeting he fulfill'd
 The purpos'd counsel pre-ordain'd and fixt
 Of the Most High, who in full frequency bright
 Of angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake
 Gabriel this day by proof thou shalt behold,
 Thou and all angels conversant on earth
 With man or mens affairs, how I begin
 To verifie that solemn message late,
 On which I sent thee to the virgin pure
 In Galilee, that she should bear a son
 Great in renown, and call'd the son of God;
 Then toldst her, doubting how these things could be
 To her a virgin, that on her should come
 The Holy-Ghost, and the power of the Highest
 O'er-shadow her: this man born and now up-grown,
 To shew him worthy of his birth divine
 And high prediction, henceforth I expose
 To satan; let him tempt and now assay
 His utmost subtilty, because he boasts
 And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
 Of his apostasie; he might have learnt
 Less overweening, since he fail'd in Job,
 Whose constant perseverance overcame
 What e'er his cruel malice could invent.

He now shall know I can produce a man
 Of female seed, far abler to resist
 All his solicitations, and at length
 All his vast force, and drive him back to hell,
 Winning by conquest what the first man lost
 By tallacy surpriz'd. But first I mean
 To exercise him in the wilderness,
 There he shall first lay down the rudiments
 Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
 To conquer sin and death the two grand foes,
 By humiliation and strong sufferance:
 His weakness shall o'ercome satanick strength
 And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
 That all the angels and aetherial powers,
 They now, and men hereafter may discern,
 From what consummate virtue I have chose
 This perfect man, by merit call'd my son,
 To earn salvation for the sons of men.

So spake th' eternal Father, and all heav'n
 Admiring stood a space, then into hymns
 Burst forth, and in celestial measures mov'd
 Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
 Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory and triumph to the son of God,
 Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
 But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
 The father knows the son; therefore secure
 Ventures his filial virtue, though untry'd,
 Against what e'er may tempt, what e'er seduce,
 Allure, or terrifie, or undermine.
 Be frustrate all ye stratagems of hell,

And devilish machinations come to nought.

So they in heav'n their odes and vigils tun'd:
 Mean while the son of God, who yet some days
 Lodg'd in Bethabara where John baptiz'd,
 Musing and much revolving in his breast,
 How best the mighty work he might begin
 Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
 Publish his god-like office now mature,
 One day forth walk'd alone. the spirit leading;
 And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
 With solitude, till far from track of men,
 Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
 He entered now the bordering desert wild,
 And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
 His holy meditation thus pursu'd.

O what a multitude of thoughts at once
 Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
 What from within I feel my self, and hear,
 What from without comes often to my ears,
 Ill sorting with my present state compar'd.
 When I was yet a child, no childish play
 To me was pleasing. all my mind was set
 Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
 What might be publick good; my self I thought
 Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
 All righteous things: therefore above my years,
 The law of God I read and found it sweet,
 Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
 To such perfection, that ere yet my age
 Had measur'd twice six years, at our great feast
 I went into the temple, there to hear

The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own;
And was admir'd by all, yet this not all
To which my spirit aspir'd, victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
Brute violence and proud tyrannick pow'r,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd:
Yet held it more humane, more heav'nly, first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul
Not wilfully mis-doing, but unaware
Mis-led; the stubborn only to destroy.
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving
By words at times cast forth inly rejoic'd,
And said to me apart, high are thy thoughts
O son, but nourish them and let them soar
To what height sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless fire.
For know, thou art no son of mortal man,
Though men esteem thee low of parentage,
Thy father is th' eternal king who rules
All heav'n and earth, angels and sons of men;
A messenger from God fore-told thy birth
Conceiv'd in me a virgin, he fore-told
Thou should'st be great and sit on David's throne,
And of thy kingdom there shall be no end.
At thy nativity a glorious quire

Of angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung
To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born,
Where they might see him, and to thee they came;
Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,
For in the inn was left no better room:
A star, not seen before in heav'n appearing
Guided the wise men thither from the east,
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold,
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star new grav'n in heav'n,
By which they knew the king of Israel born.
Just Simeon, and prophetick Anna, warn'd
By vision found thee in the temple, and spake
Before the altar and the vested priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood:
This having heard, straight I again resolv'd
The law and prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay even to the death,
Ere I the promis'd kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.
Yet neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
The time prefix'd I waited, when behold!
The baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah and his way prepare.
I as all others to his baptism came,

Which I believ'd was from above; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd
Me him (for it was shewn him so from heav'n)
Me him whose harbinger he was; and first
Refus'd on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won:
But as I rose out of the laving stream,
Heav'n open'd her eternal doors, from whence
The spirit descended on me like a dove,
And last the sum of all, my father's voice,
Audibly heard from heav'n, pronounc'd me his,
Me his beloved son, in whom alone
He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
The authority which I deriv'd from heav'n.
And now by some strong motion I am led
Into this wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.

So spake our morning star, then in his rise,
And looking round on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades;
The way he came not having mark'd, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.
Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night

Under the covert of some antient oak,
Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,
Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last
Among wild beasts: they at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
The fiery serpent fled, and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glar'd aloof.
But now an aged man in rural weeds,
Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or wither'd sticks to gather; which might serve
Against a winters day when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.

Sir, what ill chance has brought thee to this place
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan, for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His carcass, pin'd with hunger and with drought.
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late
Our new baptizing prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd the son
Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wilde, constrain'd by want, come forth
To town or village nigh (nighest is far)
Where ought we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new; fame also finds us out.
To whom the son of God. Who brought me hither

Will bring me hence, no other guide I seek.

By miracle he may, reply'd the swain.

What other way I see not, for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
More than the camel, and to drink go far,
Men to much misery and hardship born;
But if thou be the son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
So shalt thou save thy self and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.

He ended, and the son of God reply'd.

Think'st thou such force in bread; is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God? who fed
Our fathers here with manna; in the mount
Moses was forty days, not eat nor drank,
And forty days Elijah without food
Wandred this barren waste, the same I now:
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?

Whom thus answer'd th' arch-fiend now undisguis'd

'Tis true, I am that spirit unfortunate,
Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt
Kept not my happy station, but was driv'n
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
By rigour unconniving, but that oft
Leaving my dolorous prison I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of earth,
Or range in th' air, nor from the heav'n of heav'n

Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;
And when to all his angels he propos'd
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud,
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office; and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibb'd with lyes
To his destruction, as I had in charge,
For what he bids I do; though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous, I should so have lost all sense.
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee, and approach thee, whom I know
Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy God-like deeds?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind: why should I? they to me
Never did wrong or violence, by them
I lost not what I lost, rather by them
I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell
Copartner in these regions of the world,
If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy they say excites me, thus to gain

Companions of my misery and wo.

At first it may be; but long since with wo
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof,
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each mans peculiar load;
Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd:
This wounds me most (what can it less) that man,
Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more.

To whom our Saviour sternly thus reply'd:
Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lyes
From the beginning, and in lyes wilt end;
Who boast'st release from hell, and leave to come
Into the heav'n of heav'ns: thou com'st indeed,
As a poor miserable captive thrall,
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendor, now depos'd,
Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shun'd,
A spectacle of ruin or of scorn
To all the host of heav'n; the happy place
Imports to thee no happiness, no joy,
Rather inflames thy torment, representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
So never more in hell than when in heav'n.
But thou art serviceable to heav'ns king.
Wilt thou impute t' obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all afflictions? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mothus;

For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
 Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all oracles
 By thee are giv'n, and what confess more true
 Among the nations? that hath been thy craft,
 By mixing somewhat true to vent more lyes.
 But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
 Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
 Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
 And not well understood as good not known?
 Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
 Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct
 To fly or follow what concern'd him most,
 And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
 For God hath justly giv'n the nations up
 To thy delusions, justly, since they fell
 Idolatrous, but when his purpose is
 Among them to declare his providence
 To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
 But from him or his angels president
 In ev'ry province, who themselves disdaining
 T'approach thy temple, give thee in command
 What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say
 To thy adorers? thou with trembling fear,
 Or like a fawning parasite obey't;
 Then to thy self ascrib'st the truth foretold.
 But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd;
 No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
 The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceas'd;
 And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
 Shalt be enquir'd at Delphos or else-where,
 At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.

God hath now sent his loving oracle
Into the world to teach his final will,
And sends his spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know.

So spake our Saviour; but the subtle fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd.

Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
But misery hath wrested from me: where
Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not inforc'd oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lye,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
But thou art plac'd above me, thou art lord;
From thee I can and must submit endure
Check or reproof, and glad t' escape so quit.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discours'd, pleasing to th' ear,
And tuneable as silvan pipe or song;
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire
Virtue, who follow not her lore: permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)
And talk at least, tho' I despair t' attain.
Thy father, who is holy, wise and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread his sacred courts, and minister
About his altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice

To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
Inspir'd; disdain not such access to me.

To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow,
Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st
Permission from above: thou canst not more.

He added not; and Satan bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
Into thin air diffus'd: for now began
Night with her sullen wings to double-shade
The desert, fowls in their clay nests were couch'd;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

B O O K II.

MEAN while the new baptis'd, who yet remain'd
At Jordan with the baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
Jesus Messiah Son of God declar'd,
And on that high authority had believ'd,
And with him talk'd, and with him lodg'd, I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others, though in holy writ not nam'd,
Now missing him their joy so lately found,
So lately found, and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt:
Sometimes they thought he might be only shewn,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the mount, and missing long

And the great Thisbite who on fiery wheels
Rode up to heav'n, yet once again to come.
Therefore as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho
The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
Machaerus, and each town or city wall'd
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
Or in Perea, but return'd in vain.
Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
Where winds with reeds and osiers whisp'ring play,
Plain fisher-men, no greater men them call,
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and complaints out-breath'd.
Alas, from that high hope to what relapse
Unlook'd for are we fall'n! our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth;
Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
The kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd:
Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze:
For whither is he gone, what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come;
Behold the kings of th' earth how they oppress
Thy chosen, to what height their pow'r unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast

All fear of thee; arise and vindicate
Thy glory, free thy people from their yoke:
But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,
Sent his anointed, and to us reveal'd him
By his great prophet, pointed at and shown
In publick, and with him we have convers'd;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his providence; he will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recal,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence:
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy return.

Thus they out of their complaints new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought;
But to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others return'd from baptism, not her son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none;
Within her breast, though calm; her breast, though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.

O what avails me now that honour high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute,
Hail highly favour'd, among women blest;
While I to sorrows am no less advanc'd,
And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore;
In such a season born when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air; a stable was our warmth,
A manger his, yet soon enforc'd to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murd'rous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd

With infant-blood the streets of Bethlehem;
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king; but now
Full grown to man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
By John the baptist, and in publick shown,
Son own'd from heaven by his father's voice:
I look'd for some great change; to honour? no,
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israel, and to a sign
Spoken against, that through my very soul
A sword shall pierce, this is my favour'd lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high;
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now? some great intent
Conceals him: when twelve years he scarce had seen,
I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
He could not lose himself; but went about
His father's business; what he meant I mus'd,
Since understand; much more his absence now
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
My heart hath been a store-house long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events.

Thus Mary pond'ring oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:

The while her son tracing the desert wild,
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set;
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on earth, and mission high
For Satan with sly preface to return
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his potentates in council sate;
There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Sollicitous and blank he thus began.

Princes, heav'n's ancient sons, aetherial thrones,
Demonian spirits now, from th' element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd
Pow'rs of fire, air, water, and earth beneath,
So may we hold our place and these mild seats
Without new troubles; such an enemy
Is risen to invade us, whom no less
Threatens our expulsion down to hell;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequency was impower'd,
Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but find
Far other labour to be undergon
Than when I dealt with Adam first of men,
Though Adam by his wife's allurements fell,
However to this man inferior far,
If he be man by mother's side at least,
With more than human gifts from heav'n adorn'd,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.

Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in paradise
Deceive you to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here; I summon all
Rather to be in readiness, with hand
Or counsel to assist; lest I who erst
Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.

So spake th' old serpent doubting, and from all
With clamour was assur'd their utmost aid
At his command; when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissoluteſt ſpirit that fell,
The ſenſualeſt, and, after Aſmodai,
The fleſhlieſt incubus; and thus advis'd.

Set women in his eye, and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the faireſt found;
Many are in each region paſſing fair
As the noon ſky; more like to goddeſſes
Than mortal creatures, graceful and diſcreet,
Expert in am'rous arts, enchanting tongues
Perſuaſive, virgin majeſty with mild
And ſweet allay'd, yet terrible t' approach,
Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them, tangl'd in amorous nets.
Such object hath the pow'r to ſoft'n and tame
Severeſt temper, ſmooth the rugged'ſt brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope diſſolve,
Draw out with credulous deſire, and lead
At will the manlieſt, reſoluteſt breaſt,
As the magnetic hardeſt iron draws.
Women, when nothing elſe, beguil'd the heart
Of wiſeſt Solomon, and made him build,

And made him bow to the gods of his wives.

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd:
Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thy self, because of old
Thou thy self doat'st on woman kind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace.
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,
False-titled sons of God, roaming the earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'dst,
In wood or grove by mossy fountain side,
In valley or green meadow to way-lay
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amynone, Syrinx, many more
Too long, then layd'st thy scapes on names ador'd,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
Satyr, or fawn, or silvan: but these haunts
Delight not all; among the sons of men,
How many have with a smile made small account
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
All her assaults, on worthier things intent?
Remember that Pellean conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the east
He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd;
How he surnam'd of Africa dismiss'd
In his prime youth the fair Iberian maid.
For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full

Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state;
Thence to the bait of women lay expos'd:
But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on th' accomplishment
Of greatest things; what woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire? or should she confident,
As sitting queen ador'd on beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
T' enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell;
How would one look from his majestick brow,
Seated as on the top of virtue's hill,
Discount'nance her despis'd, and put to rout
All her array, her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe? for beauty stands
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; cease t' admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abasht:
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy, with such as have more shew
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise,
Rocks whereon greatest men have often wreck'd;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond.
And now I know he hungers where no food
Is to be found, in the wild wilderness;

The rest commit to me, I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay.

He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of spirits likest to himself in guile
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons each to know his part:
Then to the desert takes with these his flight;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
After forty days fasting had remain'd,
Now hungry first, and to himself thus said:

Where will this end? four times ten days I've pass'd
Wandering this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite, that fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here; if nature need not,
Or God support nature without repast
Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
But now I feel I hunger, which declares
Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Tho' hunger still remain: so it remain
Without this body's wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of famine fear no harm,
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
Me hungry more to do my father's will.

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept

And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet;
Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing even and morn,
Tho' rav'nous, taught t' abstain from what they brought;
He saw the prophet also how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper; then how awak'd,
He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days;
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night, and now the herald lark
Left his ground-nest, high tow'ring to desert
The morn's approach, and greet her with his song:
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream;
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.
Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote or herd;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw,
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud;
Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
High roost, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
That open'd in the midst a woody scene;

Nature's own work it seem'd (nature taught art)
And to a superstitious eye the haunt
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs; he view'd it round,
When suddenly a man before him stood,
(Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city, or court, or palace-bred)
And with fair speech these words to him address'd.

With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide,
Of all things destitute, and, well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness;
The fugitive bond-woman with her son,
Out-cast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
By a providing angel; all the race
Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God
Rain'd from heav'n manna, and that prophet bold
Native of Thebes wand'ring here was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat;
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed.

To whom thus Jesus: what conclud'st thou hence?
They all had need, I as thou seest have none.

How hast thou hunger then? Satan reply'd;
Tell me if food were now before thee set,
Would'st thou not eat? thereafter as I like
The giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that
Cause thy refusal, said the subtle fiend?
Hast thou not right to all created things?
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee

Duty and service, not to stay till bid,
But tender all their pow'r? nor mention I
Meats by the law unclean, nor offer'd first
To idols, those young Daniel could refuse;
Nor proffer'd by an enemy, though who
Would scruple that, with want oppress'd? behold
Nature asham'd, or, better to express,
Troubl'd that thou should'st hunger, hath purvey'd
From all the elements her choicest store
To treat thee as befits, and as her lord,
With honour, only deign to sit and eat.

He spake no dream; for as his words had end,
Our Saviour lifting up his eyes, beheld
In ample space under the broadest shade
A table richly spread, in regal mode,
With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
And savour, beasts of chace, or fowl of game,
In pastry-built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
Gris-amber-steam'd; all fish from sea or shore,
Freshet, or purling brook, or shell or fin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd
Pontus and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
Alas, how simple, to these cates compar'd,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!
And at a stately side-board by the wine
That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
Tall stripling youths, rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymede or Hylas; distant more
Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flow'rs from Amalthea's horn,

And ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since
Of fairey damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chyming strings, or charming pipes; and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.
Such was the splendor; and the tempter now
His invitation earnestly renew'd.

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
These are not fruits forbidden, no interdikt
Defends the touching of these viands pure;
Their taste no knowledge works at least of evil,
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their lord:
What doubt'st thou Son of God? sit down and eat.

To whom thus Jesus temp'rately reply'd:
Said'st thou not, that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my pow'r that right to use?
Shall I receive by gift, what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of angels ministrant
Array'd in glory on my cup t' attend.
Why should'st thou then obtrude this diligence

In vain, where no acceptance it can find,
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles.

To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent:
That I have also pow'r to give, thou seest;
If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestowed on whom I pleas'd,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need;
Why shouldst thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect;
Of these things others quickly will dispose.
Whose pains have earn'd the far-fetcht spoil. With that
Both table and provision vanish'd quite
With sound of harpies wings, and talons heard;
Only the importune tempter still remain'd,
And with these words his temptation pursu'd.

By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd;
Thy temperance invincible besides;
For no allurements yields to appetite:
And all thy heart is set on high designs,
High actions; but wherewith to be achiev'd?
Great acts require great means of enterprise.
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thy self
Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
Lost in a desert here, and hunger-bit:
Which way, or from what hope dost thou aspire
To greatness? whence authority deriv'd?

What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
Money brings honour, friends, conquest and realms.
What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,
And his son Herod plac'd on Judah's throne,
Thy throne, but gold that got him puissant friends?
Therefore, if at great things thou would'st arrive,
Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me:

Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;
They whom I favour, thrive in wealth amain,
While virtue, valour, wisdom sit and want.

that To whom thus Jesus patiently reply'd:
Yet wealth without these three is impotent
To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.

Witness those antient empires of the earth,
In height of all their flowing wealths dissolv'd:

But men endu'd with these, have oft attain'd
In lowest poverty to highest deeds;

Gideon and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat
So many ages, and shall yet regain

That seat, and reign in Israel without end.

Among the Heathen, (for throughout the world

To me is not unknown what hath been done

Worthy memorial) canst thou not remember

Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?

For I esteem those names of men so poor,

Who could do mighty things, and could contemn

Riches, though offer'd from the hand of kings.

And what in me seems wanting, but that I
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
Extol not riches then, the toyl of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare, more apt
To slaken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms? yet not, for that a crown,
Golden in shew, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights
To him who wears the regal diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies:
For therein stands the office of a king,
His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,
That for the publick all this weight he bears.
Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king:
Which ev'ry wise and virtuous man attains:
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men or headstrong multitudes,
Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly; this attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part:
That other o'er the body only reigns;
And oft by force, which to a gen'rous mind
So reigning, can be no sincere delight.

Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless, then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a sceptre, ofttest better miss'd.

B O O K I I I.

SO spake the Son of God; and Satan stood
A while as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted and convinc'd
Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift:
At length collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts.

I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do:
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due; thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should kings and nations, from thy mouth consult,
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron's breast, or tongue of seers old
Infallible; or wert thou sought to deeds
That might require th' array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms.
These god-like virtues wherefore dost thou hide,

Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness? wherefore deprive
All earth her wonder at thy acts, thy self
The fame and glory; glory, the reward
That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
Of most erected spirits, most temper'd pure
Aethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and pow'rs all but the highest?
Thy years are ripe, and over ripe; the son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride, young Pompey quell'd
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
Inglorious: but thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus reply'd.
Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmixt?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd scarce worth the praise
They praise and they admire they know not what;

And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues and be their talk,
Of whom to be despis'd were no small praise;
His lot who dares be singularly good.
Th' intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.
This is true glory and renown, when God
Looking on th' earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through heav'n
To all his angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises; thus he did to Job,
When to extend his fame through heav'n and earth
(As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember)
He ask'd thee, hast thou seen my servant Job?
Famous he was in heav'n, on earth less known;
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
They err, who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to over-run
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault. What do these worthies,
That rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring, or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy;
Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
prais'd with temple, priest and sacrifice;

One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other,
 Till conqu'ror Death discover them scarce men,
 Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
 Violent or shameful death their due reward.
 But if there be in glory aught of good,
 'It may by means far different be attain'd
 Without ambition, war, or violence;
 By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
 By patience, temperance. I mention still
 Him whom thy wrongs, with faintly patience born,
 Made famous in a land and times obscure;
 Who names not now with honour patient Job?
 Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable?)
 By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,
 For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
 Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
 Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
 Aught suffer'd; if young African for fame
 His wasted country freed from Punic rage,
 The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
 And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
 Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek
 Oft not deserv'd? I seek not mine, but his
 Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.

To whom the tempter murm'ring thus reply'd.
 Think not so slight ~~be~~ glory, therein least
 Resembling thy great father: he seeks glory,
 And for his glory all things made, all things
 Orders and governs, not content in heav'n
 By all his angels glorify'd, requires
 Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,

Wife or unwise, no difference, no exemption;
Above all sacrifice, or hallow'd gift,
Glory he requires, and glory he receives
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
Or barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd;
From us his foes pronounc'd glory he exacts.

To whom our Saviour fervently reply'd.
And reason; since his word all things produc'd,
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to shew forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable t' ev'ry soul
Freely; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory and benediction, that is, thanks,
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompence
From them who could return him nothing else,
And not returning what would likeliest render
Contempt in stead, dishonour, obloquy?
Hard recompence, unsutable return
For so much good, so much beneficence.
But why should man seek glory? who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?
Who for so many benefits receiv'd,
Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoil'd;
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
That which to God, alone of right belongs:
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance.

So spake the Son of God: and here again

Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin; for he himself
Insatiable of glory had lost all:

Yet of another plea bethought him soon.

Of glory, as thou wilt, said he, so deem,
Worth or not worth their seeking, let it pass:
But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To sit upon thy father David's throne,
By mother's side thy father; though thy right
Be now in pow'rful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms.
Judaea now and all the promis'd land,
Reduc'd a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius: nor is always rul'd
With temp'rate sway; oft have they violated
The temple, oft the law with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus: and think'st thou to regain
Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring?
So did not Machabaeus: he indeed
Retir'd unto the desert, but with arms;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd,
That by strong hand his family obtain'd,
Tho' priests, the crown, and David's throne usurp'd,
With Modin and her suburbs once content.
If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty; zeal and duty are not slow,
But on occasions forelock watchful wait:
They themselves rather are occasion best;
Zeal of thy father's house, duty to free
Thy country from her heathen servitude;

So shalt thou best fulfill, best verify
The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign,
The happier reign the sooner it begins:
Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?

To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.

All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,
And time there is for all things, truth hath said:
If of my reign prophetic writ hath told,
That it shall never end, so when begin
The father in his purpose hath decreed,
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll:
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
Well hath obey'd; just trial ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.

But what concerns it thee when I begin
My everlasting kingdom, why art thou
Solicitous, what moves thy inquisition?
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?

To whom the tempter inly rack'd reply'd:
Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace; what worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear;
If there be worse, the expectation more

Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst ; worst is my port,
My harbour and my ultimate repose,
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime : whatever, for itself condemn'd,
And will alike be punish'd ; whether thou
Reign or reign not ; though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
(Would stand between me and thy fathers ire,
Whose ire I dread more than the fire of hell)
A shelter, and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
Happiest both to thy self and all the world,
That thou who worthiest art should'st be their king?
Perhaps thou lingrest, in deep thoughts detain'd
Of th' enterprize so hazardous and high ;
No wonder ; for though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider,
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
And once a-year Jerusalem, few days
Short sojourn ; and what thence could'st thou observe
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest in sight

In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienc'd, will be ever
Tim'rous and loth, with novice modesty,
(As he who seeking asses found a kingdom)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadvent'rous:
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of th' earth, their pomp and state,
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thy self so apt, in regal arts,
And regal mysteries, that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand.

With that (such pow'r was giv'n him then) he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain, at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, out-stretch'd in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd,
Th' one winding, th' other straight, and left between
Fair champain with less rivers intervein'd,
Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea;
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oyl and wine,
With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills;
Huge cities and high tow'r'd, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs, and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain top the tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field, and flood, temples and tow'rs
Cut shorter many a league; here thou behold'st

Assyria and her empire's ancient bounds,
Araxes and the Caspian lake, thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay,
And inaccessible th' Arabian drought:
Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
Sev'ral days journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;
There Babylon the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis
His city, there thou seest, and Bastra there;
Ecbatana her structure vast there shews,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but kings; of later fame
Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands,
The great Seleucia, Nicibis, and there
Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye thou may'st behold.
All these the Parthian, now some ages past,
By great Arfaces led, who founded first
That empire, under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great pow'r; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host

Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste; see, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial-equipage
They issue forth! steel bows, and shafts their arms,
Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel:
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs and wedges, and half-moons and wings!

He lookt and saw what numbers numberless
The city gates out-pour'd, light-armed troops
In coats of mail and military pride;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prauncing their riders bore, the flow'r and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound;
From Arachosia, from Gandaor east,
And Margiana to the Hircanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,
From Atropatia and the neighb'ring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.

He saw them in their forms of battle rang'd,
How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them shot
Sharp fleet of arrowy show'r against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight.
The field, all iron, cast a gleaming brown,
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn,
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight;
Chariots or elephants endorst with tow'rs
Of archers, nor of lab'ring pioneers,
A multitude with spades and axes arm'd

To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was, raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons fraught with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern pow'rs
Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win
The fairest of her sex Angelica,
His daughter, fought by many proudest knights,
Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemaine.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry;
At sight whereof the fiend yet more presum'd,
And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not ev'ry way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety; hear, and mark
To what end I have brought thee hither, and shew
All this fair sight: thy kingdom though foretold,
By prophet or by angel, unless thou
Endeavour as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means;
Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
But say thou wert possess'd of David's throne
By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or Jew; how could'st thou hope
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,
Between two such inclosing enemies,
Roman, and Parthian? therefore one of these

Thou must make sure thy own, the Parthian first,
By my advice, as nearer and of late
Found able by invasion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings
Antigonus, and old Hyrcanus bound,
Maugre the Roman: it shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose;
Choose which thou wilt by conquest or by league,
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly reinstal thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor,
Deliv'rance of thy brethren, those ten tribes
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve
In Habor, and among the Medes dispers'd.
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
Thus long from Israel; serving, as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,
This offer sets before thee to deliver.
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then;
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates, and beyond
Shalt reign, and Rome or Caesar not need fear.

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.
Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
And fragile arms, much instrument of war
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.

Means I must use thou say'st, prediction else
Will unpredict and fail me of the throne:
My time I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come;
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeav'ring, or to need
Thy politick maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shewn me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren as thou call'st them, those ten tribes
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons.
But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
Of numb'ring Israel, which cost the lives
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days pestilence? such was thy zeal
To Israel then, the same that now to me.
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth;
And all th' idolatries of heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heath'nish crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity,
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers; but so dy'd
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce

From Gentiles, but by circumeision vain,
 And God with idols in their worship join'd.
 Should I of these the liberty regard,
 Who free'd, as to their ancient patrimony,
 Unhumbl'd, unrepentant, unreform'd,
 Headlong wou'd follow; and to their gods perhaps
 Of Bethel and of Dan? no, let them serve
 Their enemies, who serve idols with God.
 Yet he at length, time to himself best known,
 Remembring Abraham, by some wond'rous call
 May bring them back repentant and sincere,
 And at their passing cleave th' Assyrian flood
 While to their native land with joy they haste;
 As the Red-Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
 When to the promis'd land their fathers pass'd;
 To his due time and providence I leave them.

So spake Israel's true king, and to the fiend
 Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
 So fares it when with truth falshood contends.

B O O K IV.

PERPLEX'D and troubled at his bad success
 The tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
 Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope
 To oft and the persuasive rhetoric
 That sleek'd his tongue, and won so much on Eve
 To little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve,
 This far his over-match, who self-deceiv'd
 And rash before-hand had no better weigh'd
 The strength he was to cope with or his own:

But as a man who had been matchless held
In cunning, over reach'd where least he thought,
To save his credit, and for very spight
Still will be tempting him who foys him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage-time,
About the wine press where sweet moist is pour'd,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dash'd, th' assault renew,
Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end;
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er though desp'rate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.
He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,
Wash'd by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills,
That screen'd the fruits of th' earth and seats of men
From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With tow'rs and temples proudly elevate
On sev'n small hills, with palaces adorn'd,
Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens and groves presented to his eyes,
Above the height of mountains interpos'd.
By what strange parallax or optick skill

Of vision multiply'd through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious to enquire:
And now the tempter thus his silence broke.

The city which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth
So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich
Of nations: there the capitol thou seest
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable; and there mount Palatine
Th' imperial palace, compass huge and high
The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets and terraces, and glit'ring spires.
Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of gods (so well I have dispos'd
My airy microscope) thou may'st behold
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd artificers
In cedar, marble, ivory or gold.

Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
What conflux issuing forth, or entring in,
Pretors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting or on return, in robes of state;
Lictors and rods the ensigns of their pow'r,
Legions and cohorts, turmes of horte and wings:
Or embassies from regions far remote
In various habits on the Appian road,
Or on th' Emilian, some from farthest south,
Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe Nilotic isle, and more to west,

The realm of Bocchus to the black-moor sea;
From th' Asian kings and Parthian among these,
From India and the golden Chersoness,
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreath'd;
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west,
Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
All nations now to Rome obedience pay,
To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain
In ample territory, wealth and pow'r,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,
And long renown thou justly may'st prefer
Before the Parthian; these two thrones except,
The rest are barb'rous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shar'd among petty kings too far remov'd;
These having shewn thee, I have shewn thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This emp'rour hath no son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
To Capreae an island small but strong
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
Committing to a wicked favourite
All publick cares, and yet of him suspicious,
Hated of all, and hating; with what ease
Indu'd with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne
Now made a stye, and in his place ascending
A victor people free from servile yoke?

And with my help thou may'st; to me the pow'r
Is giv'n, and by that right I give it thee.

Aim therefore at no less than all the world,
Aim at the highest, without the highest attain'd
Will be for thee no sitting or not long
On David's throne, be prophesy'd what will.

To whom the Son of God unmov'd reply'd.
Nor doth this grandeur and majestick show
Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind; though thou shouldst add to tell
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On Citron tables or Atlantie stone,

(For I have also heard, perhaps have read)
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios and Creet, and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal and myrrhine cups imboss'd with gems
And studs of pearl, to me shou'dst tell who thirst
And hunger still: then embassies thou shew'st
From nations far and nigh; what honour that,
But tedious waste of time to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries? then proceed'st to talk
Of th' emperor, how easily subdu'd,
How gloriously; I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutish monster: what if I withal
Expel a devil who first made him such?
Let his tormenter conscience find him out,
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal, who once just,

Frugal, and mild, and temp'rate, conquer'd well,
But govern ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
But lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood enur'd
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd,
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These thus degen'rate, by themselves enslav'd,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree,
Spreading and overshadow'ing all the earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world,
And of my kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this, but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

To whom the tempter impudent reply'd:
I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valu'st, because offer'd, and reject'st:
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict;
On th' other side know also thou, that I
On what I offer set as high esteem,
Nor what I part with mean to give for nought;
All these which in a moment thou behold'st,
The kingdoms of the world to thee I give;
For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,

No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
 On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
 And worship me as thy superior lord,
 Easily done, and hold them all of me;
 For what can less so great a gift deserve?

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain:
 I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,
 Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
 Th'abominable terms, impious condition;
 But I endure the time, till which expir'd,
 Thou hast permission on me. It is written
 The first of all commandments, Thou shalt worship
 The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;
 And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
 To worship thee accurst, now more accurst
 For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,
 And more blasphemous? which expect to rue.
 The kingdoms of the world to thee were giv'n,
 Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd,
 Other donation none thou canst produce:
 If giv'n, by whom but by the King of kings,
 God over all supreme? if giv'n to thee,
 By thee how fairly is the giver now
 Repaid? but gratitude in thee is lost
 Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
 As offer them to me the Son of God,
 To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
 That I fall down and worship thee as God:
 Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'st
 That evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.

To whom the fiend with fear abasht reply'd.

Be not so fore offended, Son of God;
Though sons of God both angels are and men,
If I to try whither in higher sort
Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd
What both from men and angels I receive,
Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth
Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,
God of this world invok'd and world beneath;
Who then thou art whose coming is foretold
To me so fatal, me it most concerns,
The trial hath endamag'd thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more esteem;
Me naught advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
Advise thee, gain them as thou can'st, or not.
And thou thy self seem'st otherwise inclin'd
Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute,
As by that early action may be judg'd,
When slipping from thy mother's eye thou went'st
Alone into the temple, there was found
Among the gravest Rabbies disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,
Teaching not taught; the childhood shews the man,
As morning shews the day. Be famous then
By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world,
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend;
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the prophets wrote,

The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by nature's light ;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion as thou mean'st ;
Without their learning how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee hold conversation meet ?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes ?
Error by his own arms is best evinc'd.
Look once more ere we leave this specular mount
Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold
Where on th' Ægean shore a city stands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades ;
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbl'd notes the summer long,
There flow'ry hill Hymettus with the sound
Of bees industrious murmur oft invites
To studious musing ; there Ilissus rolls
His whisp'ring stream ; within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages ; his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next :
There thou shalt hear and learn the secret pow'r
Of harmony in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian Lyric odes,

And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phoebus challeng'd for his own.
Thence what the lofty grave tragoedians taught
In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd,
In brief sententious precepts while they treat
Of fate and chance, and change in human life;
High actions, and high passions best describing:
Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratic,
Shook th' arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece
To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne.
To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,
From heav'n descended to the low-rooft house
Of Socrates, see there his tenement,
Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd
Wisest of men; from whose mouth issu'd forth
Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Sirnam'd Peripateticks, and the sect
Epicurean, and the Stoick severe.

These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight;
These rules will render thee a king compleat
Within thy self, much more with empire join'd.

To whom our Saviour sagely thus reply'd.
Think not, but that I know these things, or think
I know them not; not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I aught; he who receives

Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all profess'd
To know this on y, that he nothing knew;
The next to fabling fell, and smooth conceits;
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense;
Others in virtue plac'd felicity,
But virtue join'd with riches and long life,
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease:
The Stoic last in philosophic pride
By him call'd virtue; and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can;
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas, what can they teach, and not mis-lead;
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none,
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion

Far worse, her false resemblance only meets
An empty cloud. However many books
Wise men have said are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains
Deep vers'd in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As children gath'ring pebbles on the shore.
Or if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
That solace? all our law and story strew'd
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscrib'd;
Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon,
That pleas'd so well our victors ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove the swelling epithets thick laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek; the rest,
Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true taste excelling,
Where God is prais'd aright, and god-like men
The holiest of holies, and his saints:
Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee:

Unless where moral virtue is express'd
By light of nature not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of eloquence, statists indeed,
And lovers of their country as may seem;
But herein to our prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestick unaffected stile,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;
These only with our law best form a king.

So spake the Son of God; but Satan now
Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow reply'd.

Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts
Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor aught
By me propos'd in life contemplative,
Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,
What dost thou in this world? the wilderness
For thee is fittest place, I found thee there,
And thither will return thee, yet remember
What I toretel thee, soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hast rejected thus
Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season
When prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.

Now contrary, if I read aught in heav'n,
Or heav'n write aught of fate, by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters,
In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
Sorrows and labours, opposition, hate,
Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death;
A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
Real or allegoric I discern not,
Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefixt,
Directs me in the starry rubric set.

So saying he took (for still he knew his pow'r
Not yet expir'd) and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darknes now rose,
As day-light sunk, and brought in lowring night
Her shad'wy offspring, unsubstantial both,
Privation meer of light and absent day.
Our Saviour meek and with untroubled mind
After his airy jaunt, though hurry'd fore,
Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades
Whose branching arms thick intertwin'd might shield
From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head,
But shelter'd slept in vain, for at his head
The tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturb'd his sleep, and either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heav'n the clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mixt, water with fire

In ruin reconcil'd: nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vast wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though root'd deep as high, and sturdiest oaks
Bow'd their stiff-necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer: ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stoodst
Unshaken; nor yet staid the terror there,
Infernal ghosts, and hellish furies, round
Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappal'd in calm and sinless peace.
Thus pass'd the night so foul, till morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray;
Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres which the fiend had rais'd
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had chear'd the face of earth, and dry'd the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
To gratulate the sweet return of morn:
Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The prince of darkness, glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,
Yet with no new device, they all were spent,

Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
Desp'rate of better course, to vent his rage,
And mad despight to be so oft repell'd.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said.

Fair morning yet betides thee Son of God,
After a dismal night; I heard the rack
As earth and sky would mingle; but my self
Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them
As dang'rous to the pillar'd frame of heav'n,
Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable,
And harmless, if not wholsom, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone;
Yet as being oft times noxious where they light
On man, beast, plant, wastful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in th' affairs of men,
Over whose heads they rore, and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:
This tempest at this desert most was bent;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offer'd with my aid
To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of fate, pursue thy way
Of gaining David's throne no man knows when,
For both the when and how is no where told,
Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
For angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing

The time and means : each act is rightliest done,
Not when it must, but when it may be best.
If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's scepter get fast hold ;
Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,
So many terrors, voices, prodigies
May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
And staid not, but in brief him answer'd thus.

Me worse than wet thou find'st not ; other harm
Those terrors which thou speak'st of, did me none ;
I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
And threatning nigh, what they can do as signs
Betok'ning, or ill boding, I contemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee ;
Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offer'd aid, that I accepting
At least might seem to hold all pow'r of thee,
Ambitious spirit, and would'st be thought my God,
And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrifie
Me to thy will ; desist, thou art discern'd
And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest.

To whom the fiend now swol'n with rage reply'd :
Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born ;
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt,
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the prophets ; of thy birth at length
Announc'd by Gabriel with the first I knew,
And of th' angelic song in Bethlehem field,

On thy birth night, that sung thee Saviour born,
From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye -
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all
Flock'd to the baptist, I among the rest,
Though not to be baptiz'd, by voice from heav'n,
Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
The son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was, I am; relation stands;
All men are sons of God; yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declar'd.
Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;
Where by all best conjectures I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is; his wisdom, pow'r, intent,
By parl, or composition, truce, or league
To win him, or win from him what I can.
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
Proof against all temptation as a rock
Of adamant, and as a center, firm
To th' utmost of meer man both wise and good,
Not more; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory

Have been before contemn'd, and may again:
Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming Son of God by voice from heav'n,
Another method I must now begin.

So saying he caught him up, and without wing
Of Hippogrif bore through the air sublime
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain;
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The holy city lifted high her tow'rs,
And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, top'd with golden spires:
There on the highest pinnacle he set
The Son of God; and added thus in scorn:

There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill; I to thy father's house
Have brought thee, and highest plac'd, highest is best,
Now shew thy progeny; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down; safely if Son of God:
For it is written, He will give command
Concerning thee to his angels, in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.

To whom thus Jesus: also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God; he said and stood,
But Satan smitten with amazement fell,
As when earth's son Antaeus (to compare
Small things with greatest) in Iraffa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd still rose,
Receiving from his mother earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall and fiercer grapple join'd,

Throttled at length in th' air, expir'd and fell:
So after many a foil the tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall.
And as that Theban monster that propos'd
Her riddle, and him, who solv'd it not, devour'd;
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spight
Cast her self headlong from th' Ismenian steep;
So struck with dread and anguish fell the fiend,
And to his crew that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell; and straight a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plummy vans receiv'd him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore
As on a floating couch through the blithe air,
Then in a flow'ry valley set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine,
Ambrosial fruits, fetcht from the tree of life,
And from the fount of life ambrosial drink,
That soon refresh'd him weary'd and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,
Or thirst: and as he fed, angelic quires
Sung heav'nly anthems of his victory
Over temptation, and the tempter proud.

True image of the father whether thron'd
In the bosom of blifs, and light of light
Conceiving, or remote from heav'n, enshrin'd

fluffy tabernacle, and human form,
wand'ring the wilderness, whatever place,
habit or state, or motion, still expressing
the Son of God, with god-like force endu'd
against th' attempter of thy father's throne,
and thief of paradise; him long of old
thou didst debel, and down from heaven cast
with all his army, now thou hast aveng'd
implanted Adam, and by vanquishing
temptation hath regain'd lost paradise;
and frustrated the conquest fraudulent:
he never more henceforth will dare set foot
paradise to tempt; his snares are broke:
or though that seat of earthly blifs be fail'd,
fairer paradise is founded now
for Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou
Saviour art come down to re-instal
where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
tempter and temptation without fear.
thou, infernal serpent, shalt not long
lie in the clouds; like an autumnal star
lightning thou shalt fall from heav'n trod down
under his feet: for proof, ere this thou feel'st
thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest wound
this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in hell
triumph; in all her gates Abaddon rues
thy bold attempt; hereafter learn with aw
dread the Son of God: he all unarm'd
will chase thee with the terror of his voice
from thy demoniac holds, possession foul,
and thy legions, yelling they shall fly,

And beg to herd them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the deep
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
Hail Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

Thus they the son of God our Saviour meek
Sung victor, and from heav'nly feast refresh'd
Brought on his way with joy; he unobserv'd
Home to his mother's house private return'd.

T H E E N D.

Trago
cor
tio

K H. SAMSON AGONISTES,

A

Dramatick Poem.

The AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON.

Aristot. Poet. Cap. 6.

Τραγωδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, &c.

Tragoedia est imitatio actionis seriae, &c. per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.

PRINTED IN THE YEAR MDCCCLIV.

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OF THAT SORT OF
DRAMATIC POEM
WHICH IS CALL'D
TRAGEDY.

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently compos'd, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirr'd up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion: for so in physick, things of melancholick hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The apostle St. Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33. and Paræus commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts distinguish'd each by a chorus of heavenly harpings, and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that

honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Caesar also had begun his *Ajax*, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a father of the church, thought it not unbecoming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which is intitled, *Christ suffering*: This is mentioned to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an epistle; in behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much may be fore hand be epistl'd; that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the ancients and Italians are rather follow'd, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the chorus is of all sorts, call'd by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to *Strophe*, *Antistrophe*, or *Epod*, which were a kind of stanza's frame

only for the music, then used with the chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or being divided into stanza's or pauses, they may be called Allacostropha. Division into act and scene referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act, of the style and uniformity, and that commonly call'd the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such oeconomy, or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum: they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequall'd yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy. The circumscription of time wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is according to ancient rule and best example, within the space of 24 hours.

G



THE ARGUMENT.

Samson made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a festival-day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can ; then by his old father Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom ; and lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption ; who in the mean while is visited by other persons ; and lastly, by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or shew his strength in their presence ; he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come ; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatnings to fetch him ; the chorus yet remaining in the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance : in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterward more distinctly relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself ; wherewith the tragedy ends.

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The PERSONS.

Samson.

Manoa, the father of Samson.

Dalila his wife.

Harapha of Gath.

Publick Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

The Scene before the prison in Gaza.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

Samf. **A** Little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little farther on;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade,
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoin'd me,
Where I a pris'ner chain'd, scarce freely draw
The air imprison'd also, close and damp,
Unwholsom draught; but here I feel amends,
The breath of heav'n fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works, unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me; hence with leave
Retiring from the pop'lar noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
O wherefore was my birth from heav'n foretold
Twice by an angel; who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an off'ring burn'd,
As in a fiery column charioting
His God-like presence, and from some great act

Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd
As of a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits; if I must die
Betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;
To grind in brazen fetters under task,
With this heav'n-gifted strength? O glorious strength
Put to the labour of a beast, debas'd
Lower than bondslave! promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
Ask for this great deliv'rer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediſtion: what if all foretold
Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but my self?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
Under the ſcal of ſilence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman muſt reveal it,
O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body ſtrong!
But what is ſtrength without a double ſhare
Of wiſdom, vaſt, unwieldy, burthenſome,
Proudly ſecure, yet liable to fall
By weakett ſubleties, not made to rule,
But to ſubſerve where wiſdom bears command.
God, when he gave me ſtrength, to ſhew withal
How ſlight the gift was, hung it in my hair.

But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know:
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries;
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, decrepit age!
Light the prime work of God to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annul'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me,
They creep, yet see, I dark in light expos'd
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In pow'r of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrevocably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first created beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all;
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon
When the deserts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,

And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in ev'ry part; why was the light
To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd?
So obvious and so easy to be quench'd,
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffus'd,
That she might look at will through ev'ry pore?
Then had I not been thus exil'd from light,
As in the land of darkness yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And bury'd; but O yet more miserable!
My self, my sepulchre, a moving grave,
Bury'd, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way;
Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps t' insult,
Their daily practice to afflict me more.

Chor. This, this is he; softly a while,
Let us not break in upon him;
O change beyond report, thought or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
With languish'd head unpropt,
As one past hope, abandon'd,
And by himself giv'n over?

In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'erworn and soil'd;
Or do my eyes misrepresent? can this be he,
That heroick, that renown'd,
Irresistable Samson; whom unarm'd
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could withstand?
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid,
Ran on embattl'd armies clad in iron,
And weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass,
Chalybean temper'd steel, and frock of mail
Adamantean proof;
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanc'd,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion-ramp, old warriors turn'd
Their plated backs under his heel;
Or grov'ling soil'd their crested helmets in the dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins fell, the flow'r of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi famous to this day:
Then by main force pull'd up and on his shoulders bore
The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up heav'n.
Which shall I first bewail,
Thy bondage or lost sight,

Prison within prison
 Inseparably dark?
 Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
 The dungeon of thy self; thy soul
 (Which men enjoying sight oft without cause com
 Imprison'd now indeed, [plain
 In real darkness of the body dwells,
 Shut up from outward light
 T' incorporate with gloomy night;
 For inward light alas
 Puts forth no visual beam.
 O mirror of our fickle state,
 Since man on earth unparallel'd!
 The rarer thy example stands,
 By how much from the top of wond'rous glory,
 Strongest of mortal men,
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n.
 For him I reckon not in high estate,
 Whom long descent of birth
 Or the sphere of fortune raises;
 But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
 Might have subdu'd the earth,
 Universally crown'd with highest praises.

Samf. I hear the sound of words, their sense the air
 Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

Chor. He spake, let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,
 The glory late of Israel, now the grief,
 We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown
 From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale
 To visit or bewail thee, or if better,
 Counsel or consolation we may bring.

Salve to thy sores, apt words have power to swage
The tumours of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to fester'd wounds.

Samf. Your coming, friends, revives me, for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
Bear in their superscription (of the most
It would be understood) in prosp'rous days
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
How many evils have inclos'd me round;
Yet that which was the worst now leasts afflicts me,
Blindness, for had I sight, confus'd with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who like a foolish pilot have shipwreck'd
My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a tear,
Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? tell me, friends,
Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool
In ev'ry street, do they not say, how well
He come upon him his deserts? yet why?
Unmeasurable strength they might behold
In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;
This with the other should, at least, have pair'd,
These two proportion'd ill drove me transverse.
Chor. Tax not divine disposal, wisest men
Have err'd, and by bad women been deceiv'd;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Reject not then so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;

Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou should'st wed Philistian woman rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

Samf. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed,
The daughter of an infidel; they knew not
That what I mention'd was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd
The marriage on; that by occasion hence
I might begin Israel's deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely call'd.
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had! fond with too late,)
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
That specious monster, my accomplish'd snare.
I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end; still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors: of what now I suffer,
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
Who vanquish'd with a peal of words (O weakness!)
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke
The Philistin, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

Samf. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,
Who seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors,
Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd

Deliv'rance offer'd: I on the other side
Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds,
The deeds themselves, tho' mute, spoke loud the doer;
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their lords the Philistines with gather'd pow'rs
Enter'd Judea seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Betham was retir'd,
Not flying, but fore-casting in what place
To set upon them what advantag'd best,
Mean while the men of Judah to prevent
The harrafs of their land beset me round;
I willingly on some conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcis'd a welcome prey,
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads
Touch'd with the flame: on their whole host I flew
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
Their choicest youth; they only liv'd who fled.
Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possess'd the tow'rs of Gath,
And lorded over them whom now they serve:
But what more oft in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty,
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd
As their deliv'rer; if he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
 How Succoth and the fort of Penue!
 Their great deliverer contemn'd,
 The matchless Gideon in pursuit
 Of Madian and her vanquish'd kings:
 And how ingrateful Ephraim
 Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
 Not worse than by his shield and spear
 Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
 Had not his prowess quell'd their pride
 In that fore battle, when so many dy'd
 Without reprieve adjudg'd to death,
 For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.

Samf. Of such examples add me to the roll,
 Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
 But God's propos'd deliverance not so.

Chor. Just are the ways of God,
 And justifiable to men;
 Unless there be who think not God at all,
 If any be, they walk obscure;
 For of such doctrine never was their school,
 But the heart of the fool,
 And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
 As to his own edicts found contradicting,
 Then give the reins to wandering thought,
 Regardless of his glory's diminution;
 Till by their own perplexities involv'd
 They ravel more, still less resolv'd,
 But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th' interminable,

And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right t' exempt
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of th' enemy just cause
To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.

Down reason then, at least vain reasoning down,
Though reason here aver
That moral verdict quits her of unclean:
Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see here comes thy rev'rend sire
With careful step, locks white as down,
Old Manoa: advise
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

Samf. Ay me, another inward grief awak'd
With mention of that name renews th' assault.

Man. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place; if old respect,
As I suppose, toward your once glory'd friend,
My son now captive, hither hath inform'd
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
Came lagging after; say if he be here.

Chor. As signal now in low dejected state

As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renown'd
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to angels walk'd their streets,
None offering fight; who single combatant
Duell'd their armies rank'd in proud array,
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward arm'd
At one spear's length. O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and oh what not in man
Deceivable and vain? nay, what thing good
Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gain'd a son,
Such a son as all men hail'd me happy;
Who would be now a father in my stead?
O wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest pray'rs, then given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?
For this did th' angel twice descend? for this
Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant;
Select and sacred, glorious for a while,
The miracle of men; then in an hour
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foes derision, captive, poor, and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
Alas methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,

SAMSON AGONISTES.

29

He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

Samf. Appoint not heav'nly disposition, father,
Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
But justly; I, myself have brought them on,
Sole author, I, sole cause: if ought seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profan'd
The mystery of God giv'n me under pledge
Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy:
This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd
But warn'd by oft experience; did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her height
Of nuptial love profess, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals? in this other was there found
More faith? who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offer'd only, by the scent conceiv'd
Her spurious first-born; treason against me?
Thrice she assay'd with flatt'ring pray'rs and sighs,
And amorous reproaches to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength
Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might know:
Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence
She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt

She thought to make me traitor to myself;
 Yet the fourth time, when mustering all her wiles,
 With blandish'd parleys, feminine assaults,
 Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night
 To storm me over-watch'd, and weary'd out.
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,
 I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
 Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd
 Might easily have shook off all her snares:
 But foul effeminacy held me yok'd
 Her bond-slave; O indignity, O blot
 To honour and religion! servile mind
 Rewarded well with servile punishment!
 The base degree to which I now am fall'n.
 These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
 True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
 That saw not how degen'rately I serv'd.

Man. I cannot praise thy marriage choices, son,
 Rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead
 Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
 Find some occasion to infect our foes.
 I state not that; this I am sure, our foes
 Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
 Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner
 Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms
 To violate the sacred trust of silence
 Deposited within thee; which to have kept
 Tacit, was in thy pow'r: true; and thou bear'st
 Enough, and more the burden of that fault;

Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,
This day the Philistines a pop'lar feast
Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim
Great pomp and sacrifice, and praises loud
To Dagon, as their god who hath deliver'd
Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnify'd, and God,
Besides whom is no god compar'd with idols,
Disglorify'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befall'n thee and thy father's house.

Samf. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honour, I this pomp have brought
To Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high
Among the heathen round; to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and op'd the mouths
Of idolists, and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols;
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end; all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presum'd

Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
 His deity comparing and preferring
 Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
 Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,
 But will arise and his great name assert:
 Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
 Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
 Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
 And with confusion blank his worshippers.

[words]

Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and thee
 I as a prophecy receive; for God,
 Nothing more certain, will not long defer
 To vindicate the glory of his name
 Against all competition, nor will long
 Endure it, doubtful whether God be Lord,
 Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
 Thou must not in the mean while here forgot
 Lye in this miserable loathsome plight
 Neglected. I already have made way
 To some Philistian lords with whom to treat
 About thy ransom: well they may by this
 Have satisfy'd their utmost of revenge
 By pains and slav'ries, worse than death, inflicted
 On thee who now no more canst do them harm.

Sams. Spare that proposal, father, spare the trouble
 Of that sollicitation; let me here,
 As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
 And expiate, if possible, my crime,
 Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd
 Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
 How heinous had the fact been, how deserving

Contempt and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front? but I
God's counsel have not kept, his holy secrets
Presumptuously have publish'd, impiously,
Weakly at least, and shamefully: a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn
To their abyss and horrid pains confin'd.

Man. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite;
But act not in thy own affliction, son;
Repent the sin, but if the punishment
Thou can'st avoid, self-preservation bids;
Or th' execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself: perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;
Who ever more approves and more accepts
(Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission)
Him who imploring mercy sues for life,
Than who self-rigorous chuses death as due;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd
For self-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offer'd means, who knows
But God hath set before us, to return thee
Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou may'st bring thy off'rings, to avert
His farther ire, with pray'rs and vows renew'd?

Samf. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
To what end should I seek it? when in strength
All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts

Of birth from heav'n foretold and high exploits,
 Full of divine instinct after some proof
 Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
 The sons of Anack, famous now and blaz'd,
 Fearless of danger, like a petty god
 I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded
 On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
 Then swell'd with pride into the snare I fell
 Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
 Softned with pleasure and voluptuous life;
 At length to lay my head and hollow pledge
 Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
 Of a deceitful concubine, who shor'd me
 Like a tame weather, all my precious fleece,
 Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,
 Shaven and disarm'd among mine enemies.

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks
 Which many a famous warrior overturns,
 Thou couldst repress, nor did the dancing ruby
 Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour or the sinell,
 Or taste that cheers the hearts of gods or men,
 Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

Samsf. Where-ever fountain or fresh current flow'd
 Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure,
 With touch aetherial of heav'n's fiery rod,
 I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
 Thirst, and refresh'd; nor envy'd them the grape
 Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Chor. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
 And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
 When God with these forbidd'n made choice to rear

His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

Samf. But what avail'd this temp'rance, not compleat
Against another object more enticing?

What boots it at one gate to make defence,

And at another to let in the foe

Effeminately vanquish'd? by which means,

Now blind, disheartn'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,

To what can I be useful, wherein serve

My nation, and the work from heav'n impos'd,

But to sit idle on the household-hearth,

A burd'nous drone; to visitants a gaze,

Or pity'd object, these redundant locks

Robustious to no purpose clustring down,

Vain monument of strength; till length of years

And sedentary numbness craze my limbs

To a contemptible old age obscure.

Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,

Till vermine or the draff of servile food

Consume me, and oft invocated death

Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

Man. Wilt thou then serve Philistians with that gift
Which was expressly giv'n thee to annoy them?

Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,

Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age out-worn.

But God who caus'd a fountain at thy pray'r

From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst t' allay

After the brunt of battle, can as easy

Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,

Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;

And I persuade me so; why else this strength

Mirac'lous yet remaining in those locks?
 His might continues in thee not for naught,
 Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

Samf. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
 That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
 Nor th' other light of life continue long,
 But yield to double darkness nigh at hand;
 So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
 My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
 In all her functions weary of herself;
 My race of glory run, and race of shame,
 And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

Man. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
 From anguish of the mind and humours black,
 That mingle with thy fancy. I however
 Must not omit a father's timely care
 To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
 By ransom, or how else: mean while be calm,
 And healing words from these thy friends admit.

Samf. O that torment should not be confin'd
 To the body's wounds and sores,
 With maladies innumerable
 In heart, head, breast, and reins;
 But must secret passage find
 To th' inmost mind,
 There exercise all his fierce accidents,
 And on her purest spirits prey,
 As on entrails, joints and limbs
 With answerable pains, but more intense,
 Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me

As a lingering disease,
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangreen,
To black mortification.
Thoughts my tormenters arm'd with deadly stings
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure,
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of heav'n's desertion.

I was his nursing once, and choice delight,
His destin'd from the womb,
Promis'd by heav'nly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain;
He led me on to mightiest deeds
Above the nerve of mortal arm
Against the uncircumcis'd, our enemies:
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,
Left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss
Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;

This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
 No long petition, speedy death,
 The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise
 In ancient and in modern books enroll'd,
 Extolling patience as the truest fortitude;
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,
 All chances incident to man's frail life:
 Consolatories writ
 With study'd argument, and much persuasion sought,
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought,
 But to th' afflicted in his pangs their sound
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune,
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
 Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above,
 Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
 And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers, what is man!
 That thou towards him with hand so various,
 Or might I say contrarious,
 Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
 Not ev'nly; as thou rul'st
 Th' angelick orders and inferior creatures mute,
 Irrational and brute.
 Nor do I name of men the common rout,
 That wandring loose about,
 Grow up and perish, as the summer flie,
 Heads without name no more remembred,
 But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
 With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,

To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect:
Yet toward these thus dignify'd, thou oft
Amidst their height of noon,
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand with no regard
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscur'd, which were a fair dismissal,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high,
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission,
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and prophane, their carcases
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd:
Or to th' unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deform'd,
In crude old age:

Though not disordinate, yet causeless suff'ring
The punishment of dissolute days, in fine,
Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,
For oft alike, both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in his state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.
But who is this, what thing of sea or land?

Female of sex it seems,
 That so bedeckt, ornate, and gay,
 Comes this way sailing
 Like a stately ship
 Of Tarsus, bound for th' isles
 Of Javan or Gadier,
 With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
 Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
 Courted by all the winds that hold them play.
 An amber scent of odorous perfume
 Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;
 Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,
 And now at nearer view, no other certain
 Than Dalila thy wife.

Samf. My wife, my tray'trefs, let her not come near me.

Chor. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee fix'd
 About t' have spoke, but now, with head declin'd,
 Like a fair flow'r surcharg'd with dew, she weeps,
 And words address'd seem tears dissolv'd,
 Wetting the borders of her silk'n veil:
 But now again she makes address to speak.

Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
 I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,
 Which to have merited, without excuse,
 I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears
 May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
 In the perverse event than I foresaw)
 My pennance hath not slacken'd, though my pardon
 No way assur'd. But conjugal affection
 Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt
 Hath led me on desirous to behold

Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my pow'r,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash, but more unfortunate misdeed.

Samf Out, out Hyaena; these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of ev'ry woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
And reconcilment move with feign'd remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
Not truly penitent, but chief to try,
Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men full oft beguil'd,
With goodness principl'd not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangl'd with a pois'nous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence,
But that on th' other side if it be weigh'd
By itself, with aggravations not furcharg'd,
Or else with just allowance counterpois'd,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.

First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults;
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is, for naught,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did thou shewd'st me first the way.
But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not;
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parl,
So near related, or the same of kind,
Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me, than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway,
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
Caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou wou'dst leave me
As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:
No better way I saw than by importuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my pow'r
Thy key of strength and safety: thou wilt say,
Why then reveal'd? I was assur'd by those
Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
Against thee but safe custody, and hold:
That made for me, I knew that liberty

Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home fate full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed;
Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
Mine and love's pris'ner, not the Philistins,
Whole to my self, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in love's law have past for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much wo.
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd:
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

Samf. How cunningly the forcerefs displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine?
That malice not repentance brought thee hither,
By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, th' example;
I led the way, bitter reproach, but true,
I to myself was false ere thou to me:
Much pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed, which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feign'd, weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it, weakness to resist
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore

With God or man will gain thee no remission,
 But love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage
 To satisfy thy lust: love seeks to have love;
 My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way
 To raise in me inexpiable hate,
 Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd?
 In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
 For by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

Dal. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
 In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
 Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
 What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
 Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,
 The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
 That wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates
 And princes of my country came in person,
 Solicited, commanded, threatn'd, urg'd,
 Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil duty
 And of religion, press'd how just it was,
 How honourable, how glorious to entrap
 A common enemy, who had destroy'd
 Such numbers of our nation: and the priest
 Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
 Preaching how meritorious with the gods
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious
 Dishonourer of Dagon: what had I
 T' oppose against such pow'rful arguments?
 Only my love of thee held long debate;
 And combated in silence all their reasons
 With hard contest: at length that grounded maxim,

So ripe and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men; that to the publick good
Private respects must yield; with grave authority
Took full possession of me, and prevail'd;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty so enjoining.
Samf. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end;
In feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy.
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it wou'd have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation chose thee from among
My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,
Too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but over-pow'r'd
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
Yet now am judg'd an enemy. When then
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband?
Then, as since then, thy country's foe protest:
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection but my own;
Thou mine, not theirs; if aught against my life
Thy country fought of thee, it fought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations,
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear;
Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee:
To please thy gods thou didst it; gods unable

T' acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
 But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
 Of their own deity, gods they cannot be;
 Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd or fear'd.
 These false pretexes and varnish'd colours failing,
 Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear?

Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
 Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

Samf. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath,
 Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
 In what I thought would have succeeded best.
 Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson,
 Afford me place to shew what recompence
 Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
 Misguided; only what remains past cure
 Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
 T' afflict thyself in vain: though sight be lost,
 Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd
 Where other senses want not their delights
 At home in leisure and domestick ease,
 Exempt from many a care and chance, to which
 Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.
 I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
 Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
 From forth this loathsome prison-house, t' abide
 With me, where my redoubl'd love and care
 With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
 May ever tend about thee to old age
 With all things grateful chear'd, and so supply'd,
 That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

Samf. No, no, of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;
Nor think me so unwary or accurst
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught: I know thy trains,
Though dearly to my cost, thy ginns, and toils;
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
No more on me have pow'r, their force is null'd;
So much of adders wisdom I have learnt
To fence my ear against thy forceries.
If in my flow'r of youth and strength, when all men
Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone could'st hate me
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me:
How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child
Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
And last neglected? how would'st thou insult,
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thralldom, how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile?
This goal I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

Dak. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

Samf. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee, go with that;
Bewail thy fallhood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives:
Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood with the gold

Of matrimonial treason: so farewell.

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To pray'rs than winds and seas, yet winds to seas
Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore:
Thy anger unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calm'd.
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounc'd?
To mix with thy concerns I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame if not double-fac'd is double-mouth'd,
And with contrary blasts proclaims most deeds,
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcis'd
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defam'd,
With malediction mention'd, and the blot
Of falshood most unconjugal traduc'd.
But in my country where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be nam'd among the famousest
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb
With odours visited and annual flow'rs,
Not less renown'd than in mount Ephraim,
Jael, who with inhospitable guile

Smote Sifera sleeping through the temples nail'd.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honour and reward
Conferr'd upon me, for the piety
Which to my country I was judg'd to have shewn.
At this whoever envies or repines,
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

Chor. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

Samf. So let her go, God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety and my life.

Chor. Yet beauty though injurious, hath strange pow'r.
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possess'd, nor can be easily
Repuls'd, without much inward passion felt
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Samf. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
Not wedlock-treachery endang'ring life.

Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit,

(Which way soever men refer it)
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit

If any of these or all the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferr'd

Thy paranymp, worthless to thee compar'd,

Successor in thy bed,
 Nor both so loosely disally'd
 Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
 Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head:
 Is it for that such outward ornament
 Was lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts
 Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
 Capacity not rais'd to apprehend,
 Or value what is best
 In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong?
 Or was too much of self-love mixt,
 Of constancy no root infix'd,
 That either they love nothing or not long?
 Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
 Seeming at first all heav'nly under virgin veil,
 Soft, modest, meek, demure,
 Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
 Intestine, war within defensive arms
 A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
 Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
 Draws him awry enslav'd
 With dotage, and his sense deprav'd
 To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
 What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
 Embark'd with such a steers-mate at the helm?
 Favour'd of heav'n who finds
 One virtuous rarely found,
 That in domestic good combines:
 Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
 But virtue which breaks through all opposition,
 And all temptation can remove,

Most shines, and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lowre :
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not sway'd
By female usurpation, or dismay'd.
But had we best retire, I see a storm?

Samf. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.

Samf. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honied words ; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty as is his pile high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way :
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance

Samf. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

Chor. His traught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

Har. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath,
Men call me Harapha, of stock renown'd
As Og or Anak and the Emims old
That Kariathaim held, thou know'st me now
If thou at all art known, Much I have heard

Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd
 Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,
 That I was never present on the place
 Of those encounters, where we might have try'd
 Each other's force in camp or list'd field:
 And now am come to see of whom such noise
 Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
 If thy appearance answer loud report.

Samf. The way to know were not to see but taste.

Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought
 Gieves and the mill had tam'd thee. O that fortune
 Had brought me to the field where thou art fam'd
 To have wrought such wonders with an afs's jaw;
 I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,
 Or left thy carcass where the afs lay thrown:
 So had the glory of prowess been recover'd
 To Palestine, won by a Philistin
 From the unfore-skin'd race, of whom thou bear'st
 The highest name for valiant acts, that honour
 Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
 I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

Samf. Boast not of what thou wouldst have done, but do
 What then thou wouldst, thou seest it in thy hand.

Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
 And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

Samf. Such usage as your honourable lords
 Afford me assassinated and betray'd,
 Who durst not with their whole united pow'rs
 In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
 Nor in the house with chamber ambushes
 Close-banded durst attack me, no not sleeping

Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold
Breaking her marriage faith to circumvent me.
Therefore without feign'd shifts let be assign'd
Some narrow place inclos'd, where fight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,
Vant brass and greves, and gauntlet, and thy spear
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield;
I only with an oak'n-staff will meet thee,
And raise such out-cries on thy clatter'd iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath to boast
Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
Their ornament and safety had not spells
And black enchantments, some magician's art [heav'n
Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from
Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back
Of chaf'd wild boars, or ruff'd porcupines.

Samf. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;
My trust is in the living God, who gave me
At my nativity this strength, diffus'd
No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,
Than thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,
The pledge of my unviolat'd vow.

For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
 Go to his temple, invoke his aid
 With solemnest devotion, spread before him
 How highly it concerns his glory now
 To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
 Which t to be the pow'r of Israel's God
 Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
 Off'ring to combat thee his champion bold
 With th' utmost of his godhead seconded:
 Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
 Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

Har Presume not on thy God whate'er he be,
 Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
 Quite from his people, and deliver'd up
 Into thy enemies hand, permitted them
 To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee
 Into the common prison, there to grind
 Among the slaves and asses thy comrades,
 As good for nothing else, no better service
 With those thy boist'rous locks, no worthy match
 For valour to assail, nor by the sword
 Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,
 But by the barber's razor best subdu'd.

Samf All these indignities, for such they are
 From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
 Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
 Justly yet despair not of his final pardon
 Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
 Gracious to re-admit the suppliant;
 In confidence whereof I once again
 Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,

By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

Hir Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber. [me these?

Sam. Tongue-dought-giant, how dost thou prove

Hir Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confess'd it when they took thee
As a league-breaker, and deliver'd bound
Into our hands for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Askalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber strip'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with arm'd pow'rs thee only seeking,
To others did no violence nor spoil.

Sam. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argu'd me no foe;
And in your city held my nuptial feast:
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who threatning cruel death constrain'd the bride
To wring from me and tell to them my secret,
That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd.
When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, where-ever chanc'd,
I us'd hostility, and took their spoil
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords;
It was the force of conquest; force with force

216. SAMSON AGONISTES.

Is well ejected when the conquer'd can,
 But I a private person, whom my country
 As a league breaker gave up bound, presum'd
 Single rebellion, and did hostile acts.
 I was no private but a person rais'd
 With strength sufficient and command from heav'n
 To free my country; if their servile minds
 Me their deliverer sent would not receive,
 But to their masters gave me up for naught,
 Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve,
 I was to do my part from heav'n assign'd,
 And had perform'd it if my known offence
 Had not disabl'd me not all your force:
 These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant
 Though by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,
 Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
 As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

Har. With thee, a man condemn'd, a slave enrol'd
 Due by the law to capital punishment?
 To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

Samf. Can'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,
 To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
 Come nearer, part not hence so slight inform'd;
 But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unus'd
 Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Samf. No man withholds thee, no thing from thy hand
 Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,
 My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits,

Samf. Go baff'd coward, lest I run upon thee.

Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air then dash thee down
To th' hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

Har. By Astaroth ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries in irons loaden on thee

Chor. His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fall'n,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides
And lower looks but in a sultry chafe.

Samf. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
Though fame divulg'd him father of five sons
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

Chor. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other farther to afflict thee.

Samf. He must alledge some cause, and offer'd fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not,
And that he durst not plain enough appear'd:
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;
If they intend advantage of my labours
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

Chor. Oh how comely it is, and how reviving.

To the spirits of just men long oppress'd!
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, th' oppressor,
The brute and boist'rous force of violent men
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous and all such as honour truth;
He all their ammunition
And flats of war defeats,
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour arm'd,
Their armories and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless, while
With winged expedition,
Swift as the light'ning glance, he executes
His errand on the wicked, who surpriz'd
Lose their defence distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endu'd
Above the sons of men; but sight bereav'd
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown,
This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands.

And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,

For I descry this way

Some other tending, in his hand

A scepter or quaint staff he bears;

Comes on amain, speed in his look;

By his habit I discern him now

A public officer, and now at hand,

His message will be short and voluble.

Off. Hebrews the pris'ner Samson here I seek.

Chor. His manacles remark him, there he sits.

Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say;

This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,

With sacrifices, triumph, pomp and games;

Thy strength they know surpassing human race,

And now some public proof thereof require

To honour this great feast, and great assembly:

Rise therefore with all speed and come along,

Where I will see thee heartn'd and fresh clad

To appear as fits before th' illustrious lords. [them,

Samf. I thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell

Our law forbids at their religious rites

My presence; for that cause I cannot come.

Off. This answer, be assur'd, will not content them.

Samf. Have they not sword-players, and ev'ry sort

Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,

Juglers and dancers, anticks, mummers, mimers,

But they must pick me out with shackles tir'd,

And over-labour'd at their public mill,

To make them sport with blind activity?

Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels

In my refusal to distress me more,

Or make a game of my calamities?

Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.

Off. Regard thyself, this will offend them highly.

Samf. Myself? my conscience and internal peace.

Can they think me so broken, so debas'd

With corporal servitude, that my mind ever

Will condescend to such absurd commands?

Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,

And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief

To shew them feats, and play before their god,

The worst of all indignities, yet on me

Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

Off. My message was impos'd on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

Samf. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

Samf. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

Chor. Consider, Samson; matters now are strain'd

Up to the height, whether to hold or break;

He's gone, and who knows how he may report

Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?

Expect another message more imperious,

More lordly thund'ring than thou well wilt bear.

Samf. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift

Of strength, again returning with my hair

After my great transgression so requite

Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin

By prostituting holy things to idols?

A Nazarite in place abominable

Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon!

Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,

What act more execrably unclean, profane?

Chor. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Philistines,
Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean.

Samf. Not in their idol worship, but by labour
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power.

Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

Samf. Where outward force constrains, the sentence
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon, [holds,
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command.

Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, vent'ring to displease

God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind: which in his jealousy
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.

Yet that he may dispense with me or thee
Present in temples at idolatrous rites

For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.

Samf. Be of good courage, I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.

I with this messenger will go along,

Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.

If there be aught of presage in the mind,

This day will be remarkable in my life

By some great act, or of my days the last.

Chor. In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns.

Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,

Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
 And dar'st thou at our sending and command
 Dispute thy coming? come without delay;
 Or we shall find such engines to assail
 And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
 Though thou art firmlier fastn'd than a rock.

Samf. I could be well content to try their art,
 Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
 Yet knowing their advantages too many,
 Because they shall not trail me through their streets
 Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
 Masters commands come with a power resistless
 To such as owe them absolute subjection:
 And for a life who will not change his purpose?
 (So mutable are all the ways of men)
 Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
 Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

Off. I praise thy resolution, doff those links:
 By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
 To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

Samf. Brethren farewell, your company along
 I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
 To see me girt with friends; and how the sight
 Of me as of a common enemy,
 So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
 I know not: lords are lordliest in their wine;
 And the well-feasted priest then soonest fir'd
 With zeal, if aught religion seem concern'd:
 No less the people on their holy days
 Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable,
 Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear

Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
For God, our law, my nation or myself,
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

Chor. Go, and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the heathen round;
Lead the angel of thy birth to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rose up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire; that spirit that first rush'd on thee
In the camp of Dan
Be efficacious in thee now at need.

For never was from heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wond'rous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste
With youthful steps? much livelier than ere while
He seems: supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

Man. Peace with you, brethren, my inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast,
I heard all as I came, the city rings
And numbers thither flock, I had no will,
Lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly:
But that which mov'd my coming now was chiefly
To give you part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

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 And dar'st thou at our sending and command
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 Or we shall find such engines to assail
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Lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly:
But that which mov'd my coming now was chiefly
To give you part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

Chor. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee; say, reverend Sire, we thirst to hear.

Man. I have attempted one by one the lords
Either at home, or through the high-street passing,
With supplication prone and fathers tears,
T' accept of ransom for my son their pris'ner.
Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,
Contemtuons, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most reverenc'd Dagon and his priests.
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and state
They easily would set to sale; a third
More generous far and civil, who confess'd
They had enough reveng'd, having reduc'd
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom was propos'd.
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.

Chor. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive, and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And number'd down: much rather I shall chuse
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fixt not to part hence without him;
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forego
And quit: not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,

ake Thou for thy son are bent to lay out all;
Thou went to nurse their parents in old age,
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in the house, ennobl'd
With all those high exploits by him atchiev'd,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,
That of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd:
And I persuade me God hath not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair
Garrison'd round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
To use him farther yet in some great service,
Not to sit idle with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

hem, *Chor.* Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
Conceiv'd, agreeable to a father's love,
In both which we, as next, participate.

Man. I know your friendly minds and—O what noise!
Mercy of heav'n what hideous noise was that!
Horribly loud, un'like the former shout.

Chor. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation perish'd!
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise.
What it continues, they have slain my son!

Chor. Thy son is rather slaying them, that out-cry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
What shall we do, stay here or run and see?

Chor. Best keep together here, lest running thither
We unawares run into danger's mouth.

This evil on the Philistins is fall'n,
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way?

Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?

Man. He can I know, but doubt to think he will;
Yet hope would fain subscribe and tempts belief,
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.

Mess. O whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold?
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason though disturb'd, and scarce consulted
To have guided me aright, I know not how,

To thee first reverend Manoa, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concern'd.

Man. The accident was loud, and heard before thee
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not;
No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

Mess. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

Man. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

Mess. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall'n,
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n.

Man. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
The desolation of a hostile city.

Mess. Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfeit.

Man. Relate by whom. *Mess.* By Samson. *Man.* That
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy. [still lessens

Mess. Ah Manoa, I refrain, too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon;
Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
Sitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.

Man. Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

Mess. Then take the worst in brief, Samson is dead.

Man. The worst indeed, O all my hope's defeated.
To free him hence! but death who sets all free
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd
Hopeful of his deliv'ry, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Swept with the lagging rear of winter's frost.
Hence I give the reins to grief, say first,

How dy'd he? death to life is crown or shame.

All by him fell thou say'st, by whom fell he?

What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

Man. Wearied with slaughter then or how? explain.

Mess. By his own hands.

Man. Self-violence? what cause

Brought him so soon at variance with himself

Among his foes?

Mess. Inevitable cause

At once both to destroy and be destroy'd;

The edifice where all were met to see him,

Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

Man. O lastly over-strong against thyself!

A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.

More than enough we know; but while things yet

Are in confusion, give us if thou canst,

Eye witness of what first or last was done,

Relation more particular and distinct.

Mess. Occasions drew me early to this city,

And as the gates I enter'd with sun-rise,

The morning trumpets festival proclaim'd

Through each high street: little had I dispatch'd,

When all abroad was rumour'd that this day

Samson should be brought forth to shew the people

Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.

I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded

Not to be absent at that spectacle.

The building was a spacious theatre

Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,

With seats where all the lords and each degree

Of sort, might sit in order to behold;
The other side was op'n, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds, under sky might stand;
Among those aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high cheer and wine,
When to their sports they turn'd. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state-livery clad; before him pipes
And timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot before him and behind,
Archers, and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Shook the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient but undaunted where they led him,
Came to the place, and what was set before him
Which without help of eye might be assay'd,
To heave, pull, draw, and break, he still perform'd
All with incredible stupendious force,
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length for intermission sake they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
Is over-tir'd, to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the arched roof gave main support.
The unsuspicious led him; which when Samson
Sate in his arms, with head a while inclin'd,
And eyes fast fixt he stood as one who pray'd,
Some great matter in his mind revolv'd.

At last with head erect thus cry'd aloud,
 Hitherto, lords, what your commands impos'd
 I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying,
 Nor without wonder or delight beheld:
 Now of my own accord such other tryal
 I mean to shew you of my strength, yet greater,
 As with amazement shall strike all who behold.
 This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd,
 As with the force of winds and waters pent,
 When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
 With horrible confusion to and fro,
 He tugg'd, he took, till down they came and drew
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
 Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
 Their choice nobility and flower, not only
 Of this but each Philistian city round
 Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
 Samson with these inmixt, inevitably
 Pull'd down the same destruction on himself;
 The vulgar only escap'd who stood without.

Chor O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious!
 Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
 The work for which thou wast foretold
 To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
 Among thy slain self-kill'd
 Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold,
 Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd
 Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more
 Than all thy life had slain before.

Semichor. While their hearts were jocund and sublime,

Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
And fat regorg'd of bulls and goats,
Chaunting their idol, and preferring
Before our living dread who dwells
In Silo his bright sanctuary:
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urg'd them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer.
They only set on sport and play,
Unweectingly importun'd
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men,
Fall'n into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves t' invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.

Semichor. But he though blind of sight,
Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,
His fiery virtue rous'd
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as ev'ning dragon came,
Assailant on the perched roosts,
And nests in order rang'd
Of tame villatick fowl; but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So virtue giv'n for lost,
Deprest, and overthrown, as seem'd,
Like that self-begott'n bird
In th' Arabian woods embost,

That no second knows nor third,
And lay ere while a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teem'd,
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deem'd,
And though her body die, her fame survives,
A secular bird ages of lives.

Man. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroickly hath finish'd
A life heroick, on his enemies
Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
Through all Philistian bounds: to Israel
Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
To himself and father's house eternal fame:
And which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
But favouring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breasts, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Soak'd in his enemies blood, and from the stream
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
The cloded gore. I with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend

With silent obsequy and funeral train
Home to his father's house: there will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever-green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enroll'd
In copious legend, or sweet lyrick song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour, and adventures high:
The virgins also shall on feastful days
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt
What th' unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent,
His servant he with new acquit
Of true experience from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismiss'd,
And calm of mind all passion spent.

T H E E N D.

At

T

C O M U S.

A

M A S K

P R E S E N T E D

AT LUDLOW-CASTLE, MDCXXXIV.

B E F O R E

THE EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,
THEN PRESIDENT
OF WALES

PRINTED IN THE YEAR MDCCCLV.

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The Copy of a Letter written by Sir HENRY
WOOTTON, to the Author, upon the fol-
lowing Poem.

From the College, this 13th of April, 1638.

S I R,

IT was a special favour, when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it, and to enjoy it rightly; and in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. H. I would have been bold in our vulgar phrase to mend my draught, (for you left me with an extreme thirst) and to have begged your conversation again, jointly with your said learned friend, at a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together some good authors of the ancient time: among which, I observed you to have been familiar.

Since your going you have charg'd me with new obligations, both for a very kind letter from you dated the sixth of this month, and for a dainty piece of entertainment which came therewith. Wherein I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain dorique delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: ipsa mollities. But I must not omit to tell you, that I now only owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work it self I had view'd some good while before, with

singular delight, having receiv'd it from our common friend Mr. R. in the very close of the late R's poems, printed at Oxford, whereunto it was added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of stationers, and to leave the reader con la bocca dolce.

Now Sir, concerning your travels, wherein I may challenge a little more privilege of discourse with you; I suppose you will not blanch Paris in your way: therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. M. B. whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord S. as his governor; and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your farther journey into Italy, where he did reside by my choice some time for the king, after mine own recess from Venice.

I should think that your best line will be thorough the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa, whence the passage into Tuscany is as diurnal as a Gravesend barge: I hasten as you do to Florence, or Siena, the rather to tell you a short story from the interest you have given me in your safety.

At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni, an old Roman courtier in dangerous times, having been steward to the Duca di Pagliano, who with all his family were strangled, save this only man that escap'd by foresight of the tempest: with him I had often much chat of those affairs; into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and at my departure toward Rome (which had been the center of his experience) I had won confidence enough to beg his advice, how I might carry myself securely there, without offence of others, or of mine

own conscience. Signor Arrigo mio (*says he*) I pensieri
bretti, et il viso sciolto, will go safely over the whole
world: of which Delphian oracle (*for so I have found it*)
your judgment doth need no commentary; and therefore
(Sir) I will commit you with it to the best of all securi-
ties, God's dear love, remaining

Your friend as much at command

as any of longer date,

Henry Wootton.

P O S T S C R I P T.

S I R,

Have expressly sent this my foot-boy to prevent your
departure without some acknowledgment from me
of the receipt of your obliging letter, having myself
through some business, I know not how, neglected the
ordinary conveyance. In any part where I shall un-
derstand you fixed, I shall be glad, and diligent to en-
ertain you with home-novelties; even for some fomen-
tion of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the
cradle.

The PERSONS.

*The attendant spirit, afterwards in the habit of
Thyrsis.*

Comus with his crew.

The lady.

1 Brother.

2 Brother.

Sabrina the nymph.

The chief persons who presented, were,

The Lord Bracy.

Mr. Thomas Egerton his brother.

The Lady Alice Egerton.

C O M U S.

A

M A S K.

The first Scene discovers a wild Wood.

The attendant spirit descends or enters.

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
 My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
 Of bright aerial spirits live inspher'd
 In regions mild of calm and serene air,
 Above the smoak and stirr of this dim spot,
 Which men call earth, and with low-thoughted care
 Confin'd, and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
 Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
 Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,
 After this mortal change, to her true servants
 Amongst the enthron'd gods on sainted seats.
 Let some there be that by due steps aspire
 To lay their just hands on that golden key
 That ope's the palace of eternity :
 To such my errand is, and but for such,
 Would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds,
 With the rank vapours of this sin-worm mould.
 But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway

Of ev'ry salt flood, and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot 'twixt high and neather Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,
That like to rich and various gemms inlay
The unadorned bosom of the deep,
Which he to grace his tributary gods
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their saphire crowns,
And wield their little tridents; but this isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-hair'd deities,
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
An old, and haughty nation proud in arms:
Where his fair off-spring nurs'd in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-entrusted sceptre: but their way
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandring passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that by quick command from sovereign Jove
I was dispatcht for their defence and guard;
And listen why, for I will tell ye now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bow'r.

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crusht the sweet poison of misused wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listd,

in Circe's island fell; (who knows not Circe,
the daughter of the sun? whose charmed cup
whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
and downward fell into a groveling swine)
This nymph that gaz'd upon his clustring locks,
With ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,
led by him, ere he parted thence, a son
such like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up and Comus nam'd,
The ripe, and frolick of his full grown age,
Leaving the Celtick and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And in thick shelter of black shades imbower'd,
Sells his mother at her mighty art,
Bringing to every weary traveller
The orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phoebus, which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst)
As the potion works, their human count'nance,
Which expresses resemblance of the gods, is chang'd
To some brutish form of wolf, or bear,
Or ounce, or tiger, or hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they, so perfect is their misery,
That once perceive their foul disfigurement,
Can boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual stie.
Therefore when any favour'd of high Jove,
Wishes to pass through this adventrous glade,
Let it as the sparkle of a glancing star

I shoot from heav'n to give him safe convey,
 As now I do: but first I must put off
 These my sky robes spun out of Iris wooff,
 And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
 That to the service of this house belongs,
 Who with his soft pipe, and smooth dittied song,
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
 And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,
 And in this office of his mountain watch,
 Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
 Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
 Of hateful steps, I must be viewless now.

*Comus enters with a charming rod in one hand, his glass
 in the other; with him a rout of monsters headed like
 sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and
 women, their apparel glist'ring; they come in making
 a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

Comus. The star that bids the shepherd fold,
 Now the top of heav'n doth hold,
 And the gilded car of day
 His glowing axle doth allay
 In the steep Atlantick stream,
 And the slop sun his upward beana
 Shoots against the dusky pole,
 Pacing toward the other goal
 Of his chamber in the east.
 Mean while welcome joy, and feast,
 Midnight shout, and revelry,
 Tipsy dance, and jollity.

Braid your locks with rosy twine,
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.
 Rigour now is gone to bed,
 And advice with scrupulous head;
 Strict age, and sower severity,
 With their grave saws in slumber lie.
 We that are of purer fire
 Imitate the starry quire,
 Who in their nightly watchful sphears,
 Lead in swift round the months and years.
 The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
 Now to the moon in wavering morrice move,
 And on the tawny sands and shelves,
 Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves;
 By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,
 The wood-nymphs deckt with daisies trim,
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
 What hath night to do with sleep?
 Night hath better sweets to prove,
 Venus now wakes, and wak'ns love.
 Come let us our rites begin,
 'Tis only day-light that makes sin
 Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
 Hail goddess of nocturnal sport,
 Dark vail'd Cotytto, t' whom the secret flame
 Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,
 That ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb
 Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,
 And makes one blot of all the air,
 Lay thy cloudy ebon chair,
 Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend

Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice morn on th' Indian steep
From her cabin'd loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale sun descry
Our conceal'd solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantaslick round.

The Measure.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees,
Our number may affright: some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains, I shall ere long
Be well-stock'd with as fair a herd as graz'd
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazling spells into the spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight,
Which must not be, for that's against my course;
I under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-plac'd words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Win me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye

Hath met the virtue of this magick dust,
 I shall appear some harmless villager,
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
 But here she comes, I fairly step aside
 And harken, if I may her business hear.

The Lady enters.

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
 My best guide now; methought it was the sound
 Of riot, and ill-manag'd merriment,
 Such as the jocund flute, or gameful pipe
 Stirrs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
 When for their teeming flocks, and granges full
 In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
 And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
 To meet the rudeness, and swell'd insolence
 Of such late wassailers; yet O where else
 Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
 In the blind mazes of this tangl'd wood?
 My brothers when they saw me wearied out
 With this long way, resolving here to lodge
 Under the spreading favour of these pines,
 Stept as they said to the next thicket side
 To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
 As the kind hospitable woods provide.
 They left me then, when the gray-hooded ev'n
 Like a sad votarist in palmers weed
 Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phoebus' wain.
 But where they are, and why they came not back,
 Is now the labour of my thoughts, 'tis likeliest
 They had engag'd their wandring steps too far.

And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me; else O theevish night,
Why should'st thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
That nature hung in heav'n, and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the mis-led and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence ev'n now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rise, and perfect in my list'ning ear,
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? a thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory
Of calling shapes, and beckning shadows dire,
And airy tongues, that syllable mens names
On sands and shoars, and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion conscience.—
O welcome pure-ey'd faith, white-handed hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemish'd form of chastity;
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That he, the Supreme Good, t' whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glist'ring guardian if need were
To keep my life and honour unassail'd.
Was I deceiv'd, or did a fable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err, there does a fable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,

And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
 I cannot hallow to my brothers, but
 Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
 I'll venture, for my new enliv'ned spirits
 Prompt me; and they perhaps are not far off.

S O N G.

SWEET echo, sweetest nymph that liv'st unseen
 Within thy airy shell,

By slow Menander's margent green,
 And in the violet-embroider'd vale,

Where the love lorn nightingale
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;

Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair

That likest thy Narcissus are?

O if thou have

Hid them in some flow'ry cave,

Tell me but where,

Sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphear,

So may'st thou be translated to the skies,

And give resounding grace to all heav'n's harmonies.

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
 Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
 Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
 And with these raptures moves the vocal air
 To testify his hidden residence;
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
 At ev'ry fall smoothing the raven dounge
 Of darkness till it smil'd: I have oft heard

My mother Circe with the sirens three,
 Amidst the flowry-kirtl'd Naiades,
 Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs,
 Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
 And lap it in Elyſium: Sylla wept,
 And chid her barking waves into attention,
 And fell Charybdis murmur'd ſoft applauſe:
 Yet they in pleaſing ſlumber lull'd the ſenſe,
 And in ſweet madneſs robb'd it of itſelf.
 But ſuch a ſacred, and home-felt delight,
 Such ſober certainty of waking bliſs
 I never heard till now. I'll ſpeak to her,
 And ſhe ſhall be my queen. Hail foreign wonder,
 Whom certain theſe rough ſhades did never breed,
 Unleſs the goddeſs that in rural ſhrine
 Dwell't here with Pan, or Silvan, by bleſt ſong
 Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
 To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

La. Nay gentle ſhepherd, ill is loſt that praiſe
 That is addreſt to unattending ears;
 Not any boaſt of ſkill, but extreme ſhift
 How to regain my fever'd company,
 Compell'd me to awake the courteous echo
 To give me answer from her moſſy couch.

Co. What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?

La. Dim darkneſs, and this leafy labyrinth.

Co. Could that divide you from near uſhering guides?

La. They left me weary on a graſſy turf.

Co. By falſhood, or diſcourteſy, or why?

La. To ſeek i' th' valley ſome cool friendly ſpring.

Co. And left your fair ſide all unguarded, lady?

La. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

Co. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

La. How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Co. Imports their loss, beside the present need?

La. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

Co. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

La. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips.

Co. Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox

In his loose traces from the furrow came,

And the swink't hedger at his supper sat;

I saw them under a green mantling vine

That crawls along the side of yon small hill,

Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;

Their port was more than human, as they stood:

I took it for a fairy vision

Of some gay creatures of the element,

That in the colours of the rainbow live,

And play i' th' plighted clouds. I was aw struck,

And as I pass'd, I worshipt; if those you seek,

It were a journey like the path to heav'n,

To help you find them. *La.* Gentle villager,

What readiest way would bring me to that place?

Co. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

La. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose

In such a scant allowance of star-light,

Would over-task the best land-pilot's art,

Without the sure guess of well practis'd feet.

Co. I know each lane, and every alley green,

Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,

And every bosky bourn from side to side,

My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood:

And if your stray attendance be yet lodg'd,
 Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
 Ere morrow wake, or the low-roofed lark
 From her thatch'd pallat rowse; if otherwise
 I can conduct you, lady, to a low
 But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
 Till further quest. *La.* Shepherd, I take thy word,
 And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
 With smoaky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
 And courts of princes, where it first was nam'd,
 And yet is most pretended: in a place
 Less warrant'd than this, or less secure
 I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
 Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
 To my proportion'd strength. Shepherd, lead on.—

The two Brothers.

Eld. Bro. Unmuffle ye faint stars, and thou fair moon
 That wont'st to love the travellers benizon,
 Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
 And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
 In double night of darkness, and of shades;
 Or if your influence be quite damm'd up
 With black usurping mists, some gentle taper
 Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
 Of some clay habitation visit us
 With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light.
 And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
 Or Tyrian Cynosure. *2. Bro.* Or if our eyes
 Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear

The folded flocks pen'd in their watled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little chearing
In this close dungeon of innumerable bows.
But O that hapless virgin! our lost sister,
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her boulder now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement, and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

Eld. Bro. Peace, brother, be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion?
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into mis-becoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what virtue would
In her own radiant light, though sun and moon.

Were in the flat sea sunk. And wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where with her best nurse contemplation,
She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' th' center, and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

2. *Bro.* 'Tis most true,
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate house:
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?
But beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with uninchanted eye,
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit
From the rash hand of bold incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps
Of misers treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste
Of night, or loneliness it recks me not,

fear the dread events that dog them both,
 Left some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
 Of our unowned sister.

Eld. Bro. I do not, brother,
 Infer, as if I thought my sister's state
 Secure without all doubt, or controversy :
 Yet where an equal poise of hope and fear
 Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is
 That I incline to hope, rather than fear,
 And gladly banish squint suspicion.
 My sister is not so defenceless left
 As you imagine, she has a hidden strength
 Which you remember not.

2. Bro. What hidden strength,
 Unless the strength of heav'n, if you mean that ?

Eld. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
 Which if heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own :

'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity :
 She that has that, is clad in complete steel,
 And like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen
 May trace huge forests. and unharbour'd heaths,
 Famous hills, and sandy perilous wildes,
 Where through the sacred rays of chastity,
 No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer
 Will dare to soil her virgin purity :
 As there, where very desolation dwells
 In grots, and caverns shag'd with horrid shades,
 She may pass on with unblench'd majesty,
 Not done in pride. or in presumption.
 We say no evil thing that walks by night,
 By fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,

Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaïd ghost,
That breaks his magick chains at curfew time,
No goblin, or swart fairy of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tam'd the brinded lioness,
And spotted mountain pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Fear'd her stern frown, and she was queen o' th' woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,
Wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dash'd brute violence
With sudden adoration, and blank aw?
So dear to heav'n is faintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lacky her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream, and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal: but when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,

But most by leud and lavish act of sin,
 Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
 The soul grows clotted by contagion,
 Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
 The divine property of her first being.
 Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
 Oft seen in charnel vaults, and sepulchres,
 Lingring and sitting by a new-made grave,
 As loth to leave the body that it lov'd,
 And linkt itself by carnal sensuality
 To a degenerate and degraded state.

1 Bro. How charming is divine philosophy!
 Not harsh, and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
 But musical as is Apollo's lute,
 And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
 Where no crude surfeit reigns. *Eld. Bro.* List, list, I hear
 Some far off hollow break the silent air.

1 Bro. Methought so too; what should it be.

Eld. Bro. For certain
 Either some one like us night-founder'd here,
 Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
 Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

1 Bro. Heav'n keep my sister. Agen, agen, and near
 Best draw, and stand upon our guard.

Eld. Bro. I'll hollow;
 If he be friendly he comes well; if not,
 Defence is a good cause, and heaven be for us.

The attendant spirit, habited like a shepherd.
 That hollow I should know, what are you? speak.
 Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else.

Spir. What voice is that, my young lord? speak again. Deep

Bro. O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd sure. And h

Eld. Bro. Thyrsis? whose artful strains have oft delaid By fly

The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, With

And sweetn'd every muskrose of the dale, The v

How cam'st thou here, good swain? hath any ram And t

Slit from the fold, or young kid lost his dam, fixes

Or straggling weather the pen't flock forsook? Charac

How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook? Tendi

Spir. O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy, That
I came not here on such a trivial toy He an

As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth like f

Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth doing

That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought a the

To this my errand, and the care it brought. et ha

But, O my virgin lady, where is she? To inv

How chance she is not in your company? of the

Eld. Bro. To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without blame, this e
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came. ad ta

Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true. of kno

Eld. Bro. What fears, good Thyrsis? prethee briefly late r

Spir. I'll tell ye, 'tis not vain or fabulous, (shew. With i
(Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance) With f

What the sage poets, taught by th' heav'nly muse, frapt

Story'd of old in high immortal verse, to me

Of dire Chimera's and enchanted isles, ill fa

And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell, he w

For such there be, but unbelief is blind. al fil

Within the navel of this hideous wood, whic

Immur'd in cypress shades a sorcerer dwells, an

Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus, he re

gen. Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;
 e. And here to every thirsty wanderer,
 elaid By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
 With many murmurs mixt, whose pleasing poison
 The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
 And the inglorious likeness of a beast
 Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
 Character'd in the face; this have I learnt
 Tending my flocks hard by i'th' hilly crofts,
 oy, That brow this bottom glade, whence night by night
 He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
 Like stabl'd wolves, or tigers at their prey,
 Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
 In their obscured haunts of inmost bowres.
 Yet have they many baits; and guileful spells,
 To inveigle and invite th' unwary sense
 Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
 lame, This evening late by then the chewing flocks
 Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
 e. Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold
 orichly Late me down to watch upon a bank
 (shew. With ivy canopied, and interwove
 With flaunting hony-suckle, and began
 e, Trapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
 To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
 Till fancy had her fill; but ere a close
 He wonted rore was up amidst the woods,
 And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance,
 Which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a while,
 An unusual stop of sudden silence
 Gave respite to the drowsy frightened steeds

That draw the litter of close curtain'd sleep.
 At last a soft and solemn breathing sound
 Rose like a stream of rich distill'd perfumes,
 And stole upon the air, that even silence
 Was took ere she was ware, and wisht she might
 Deny her nature, and be never more
 Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear,
 And took in strains that might create a soul
 Under the ribs of death: but O ere long
 Too well I did perceive it was the voice
 Of my most honour'd lady, your dear sister.
 Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear,
 And O poor hapless nightingale thought I,
 How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
 Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste
 Through paths and turnings oft'n trode by day,
 Till guided by mine ear I found the place
 Where that damn'd wifard hid in sly disguise,
 (For so by certain signs I knew) had met
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
 The idle'st innocent lady his wisht prey,
 Who gently ask'd if he had seen such two,
 Supposing him some neighbour villager;
 Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess'd
 Ye were the two she meant, with that I sprung
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here.
 But further know I not, *a Bro.* O night and shades,
 How are ye join'd with hell in triple knot,
 Against th' unarmed weakness of one virgin
 Alone, and helpless! is this the confidence
 You gave me, brother? *Eld. Bro.* Yes, and keep it still

Lean on it safely, not a period
 Shall be unpaid for me: against the threats
 Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
 Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm,
 Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
 Surpris'd by unjust force, but not inthrall'd;
 Yea even that which mischief meant most harm,
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last
 Gather'd like scum, and settl'd to itself,
 It shall be in eternal restless change
 Self-fed, and self-consum'd; if this fail,
 The pillar'd firmament is rott'ness,
 And earth's base built on stubble. But come lets on:
 Against th' opposing will and arm of heav'n
 May never this just sword be lifted up,
 But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
 With all the griesly legions that troop
 Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
 Harpyes and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
 Twixt Africa and Inde, I'll find him out,
 And force him to restore his purchase back,
 Or drag him by the curls, to a foul death,
 Curs'd as his life.

Spir. Alas! good vent'rous youth,
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
 But here thy sword can do thee little stead,
 For other arms, and other weapons must
 Be those that quell the might of hellish charms,
 He with his bare wand can unthred thy joints,

And crumble all thy sinews.

Eld. Bro. Why prethee, shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near,
As to make this relation?

Spir. Care and utmost shifts
How to secure the lady from surprisal,
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
In every virtuous plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray:
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to extasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And shew me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties;
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out;
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flow'r, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteem'd. and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon,
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave;
He call'd it *Haemony*, and gave it me,
And bad me keep it as of sov'reign use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew, blast or damp,
Or gastly furies apparition:
I purs'd it up, but little reck'ning made,
Till now that this extremity compell'd,

But now I find it true; for by this means
 I knew the foul inchanter, though disguis'd,
 Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,
 And yet came off: if you have this about you
 (As I will give you when we go) you may
 Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
 Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood,
 And brandish't blade rush on him, break his glass,
 And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
 But seize his wand, though he and his curst crew
 Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
 Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,
 Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

Eld Bro. Thyrsis lead on a pace, I'll follow thee,
 And some good angel bear a shield before us.

The scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft musick, tables spread with all dainties. Comus appears with his rabble, and the lady set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.

Comus. Nay, lady, sit; if I but wave this wand,
 Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster,
 And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
 Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

La. Fool, do not boast,
 Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
 With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
 Thou hast immanacl'd, while heav'n sees good.

Co. Why are you vext, lady? why do you frown?

Here dwell no frowns, nor anger, from these gates
Sorrow flies far: see here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first behold this cordial julip here
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds
With spirits of balm, and fragrant syrups mixt.
Not that Nepentes which the wife of Thone,
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs which nature lent
For gentle usage, and soft delicacy?
But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,
And harshly deal like an ill borrower
With that which you receiv'd on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tir'd all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted: but fair virgin
This will restore all soon.

La. 'I will not, false traitor,
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banisht from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? what grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters? mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver,

Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
With visor'd falshood, and base forgery,
And would'st thou seek agen to trap me here
With lickerish baits fit to insnare a brute?
Were it a draft for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none
But such as are good men can give good things,
And that which is not good, is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.

Ce. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoick furr,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynick tub,
Praising the lean and fallow abstinence.
Wherefore did nature pour her bounties forth,
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please, and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk
To deck her sons, and that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loyns
She hutch't th' all-worshipt ore, and precious gems
To store her children with; if all the world
Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but freize,
Th' all-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd,
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like nature's bastards, not her sons,

Who would be quite furcharg'd with her own weight,
 And strangl'd with her waste fertility;
 Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark't with
 The herds would over-multitude their lords, (plumes,
 The sea o'erfraught would swell, and th' unfought
 Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep, (diamonds
 And so bestud with stars, that they below
 Would grow inur'd to light, and come at last
 To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
 List lady, be not coy, and be not cosen'd
 With that same vaunted name virginity,
 Beauty is nature's coin, must not be hoorded,
 But must be current, and the good thereof
 Consists in mutual and partaken blifs,
 Unfav'ry in th' enjoyment of itself;
 If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
 It withers on the stalk with languish'd head.
 Beauty is nature's brag, and must be shown
 In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
 Where most may wonder at the workmanship;
 It is for homely features to keep home,
 They had their name thence; coarse complexions
 And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
 The sampler, and to teize the housewives wool.
 What need a vermil-tinctur'd lip for that,
 Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
 There was another meaning in these gifts,
 Think what, and be advis'd, you are but young yet.

La. I had not thought to have unlockt my lips
 In this unhallow'd air, but that this jugler,
 Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,

Obtruding false rules, pranckt in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride:
Impostor, do not charge most innocent nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance; she good caterefs
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare temperance:
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pamper'd luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd,
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumber'd with her store,
And then the giver would be better thank'd,
His praise due paid; for fwinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Cramms, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enough? to him that dares
Arm his prophane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity,
Fain would I something say, yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul to apprehend
The sublime notion, and high mystery
That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of virginity,
And thou art worthy that thou should'st not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.

Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric
 That hath so well been taught her dazling fence,
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convince'd;
 Yet should I try, the uncontrouled worth
 Of this pure cause would kindle my rap'd spirits
 To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
 That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
 And the brute earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
 Till all thy magick structures rear'd so high,
 Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.

Co. She fables not, I feel that I do fear
 Her words set off by some superior power;
 And though not mortal, yet a cold shudd'ring dew
 Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
 Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus
 To some of Saturns crew. I must dissemble,
 And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more,
 This is meer moral babble, and direct
 Against the canon laws of our foundation;
 I must not suffer this, yet 'tis but the lees
 And settlings of a melancholy blood:
 But this will cure all straight, one sip of this
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.—

*The brothers rush in with swords drawn, wrest his
 glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground; Drop
 his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven
 in; the attendant spirit comes in.*

Spir. What, have you let the false enchanter 'scape?
 O ye mistook, ye should have snatch'd his wand
 And bound him fast, without his rod revers'd,
 And backward mutters of dissevering power,
 We cannot free the lady that sits here
 In stony fetters fixt, and motionless;
 Yet stay, be not disturb'd, now I bethink me,
 Some other means I have which may be us'd,
 Which once of Melibaeus old I learnt,
 The soothest shepherd that e'er pip't on plains.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
 That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
 Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure;
 Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
 That had the scepter from his father Brute.
 She guiltless damsel flying the mad pursuit
 Of her enraged stepdame Guendolen,
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood
 That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.
 The water nymphs that in the bottom plaid,
 Held up their pearled wrists and took her in,
 Bearing her straight to aged Nereus hall,
 Who piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,
 And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
 In nectar'd lavers strew'd with asphodil,
 And through the porch and inlet of each sense
 Dropt in ambrosial oils till she reviv'd,
 And underwent a quick immortal change,
 Made goddess of the river; still she retains
 Her maid'n gentleness, and oft at eve
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows.

Helping all urchin blast, and ill-luck signs
 That the shrewd meddling elfe delights to make,
 Which she with precious viol'd liquors heals,
 For which the shepherds at their festivals
 Carrol her goodness loud in rustick lays,
 And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
 Of pancies, pinks and gaudy daffadils.
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
 The clasping charm, and thaw the numming spell,
 If she be right invok'd in warbled song,
 For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
 To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
 In hard-besetting need; this will I try,
 And add the power of some adjuring verse.

S O N G.

Sabrina fair,

*Listen where thou art sitting
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lillies knitting
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
 Listen for dear honour's sake,
 Goddess of the silver lake,
 Listen and save.*

Listen and appear to us,
 In name of great Oceanus,
 By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
 And Tethys grave majestick pace,
 By hoary Nereus wrinkled look,
 And the Carpathian wisard's hook,

By scaly Triton's winding shell,
 And old sooth-saying Glaucus spell,
 By Leucothea's lovely hands,
 And her son that rules the strands,
 By Thetis tinsel-slipper'd feet,
 And the songs of Sirens sweet,
 By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
 And fair Ligea's golden comb,
 Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
 Sleeking her soft alluring locks,
 By all the nymphs that nightly dance
 Upon thy streams with wily glance,
 Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
 From thy coral-pav'n bed,
 And bridle in thy headlong wave,
 Till thou our summons answer'd have.

Listen and save.

Sabrina rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.

By the rusby-fringed bank,
 Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
 My sliding chariot stays,
 Thick set with agat, and the azure sheen
 Of turkis blue, and emrauld green
 That in the channel strays,
 Whilst from off the waters fleet
 Thus I set my printless feet
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
 That bends not as I tread;
 Gentle swain, at thy request
 I am here.

Spir. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here distressed,
Through the force, and through the wile
Of unblest inchanter vile.

Sab. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help insnared chastity;
Brightest lady look on me,
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure,
I have kept of precious cure,
Thrice upon thy fingers tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip,
Next this marble venom'd feat
Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold,
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bow'r.

Sabrina descends, and the Lady rises out of her seat.

Spir. Virgin daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises line,
May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth, or singed air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,

Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows rowl ashoar
The beryl, and the golden ore,
May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tower and terrass round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrhe, and cinnamon.

Come lady, while heav'n lends us grace,
Let us fly this curf'd place,
Lest the forcerer us intice
With some other new device.
Not a waste, or needless sound,
Till we come to holier ground,
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide,
And not many furlongs thence
Is your father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wish'd presence; and beside
All the swains that there abide,
With jigs, and rural dance resort,
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer;
Come let us haste, the stars grow high,
But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The scene changes, presenting Ludlow town, and the President's castle, then come in country dancers, after them the attendant Spirit, with the two Brothers and the Lady.

S O N G.

*Spir. Back, shepherds, back, enough your play,
Till next sun-shine holiday,
Here be without duck, or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns, and on the leas.*

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

*Noble lord and lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight,
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own,
Heav'n hath timely try'd their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly, and intemperance.*

The dances ended, the Spirit epiloguizes.

Spir. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that ly
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky:
There I suck the liquid air
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree:
Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund spring,
The graces, and the rosie-bosom'd hours,
Thither all their bounties bring,
There eternal summer dwells,
And west winds, with musky wing
About the cedar'n alleys fling
Nard, and Cassia's balmy smells.
Is there with humid bow,
Waters the odorous banks that blow
Flowers of more mingled hew
Than her purpled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of Hyacinth, and roses
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Lies th' Assyrian queen;
But far above in spangled sheen

Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc'd,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet intranc'd,
After her wandring labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blisful twins are to be born,
Youth and joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bow'd welkin flow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.

Mortals that would follow me,
Love virtue, she alone is free,
She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or if virtue feeble were,
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.



